



Medications at Home: Ferrous Sulfate (Elemental Iron)

The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) team celebrates with you as your baby goes home! After graduation from the NICU, your baby will need medication to stay well.

Why does my baby need this medication?

- Ferrous sulfate is used to prevent and treat anemia (also called low blood count).
- This medication helps your baby's body make red blood cells and carry oxygen to his or her important organs like the brain and heart.

How, how much, and when is this medication given to my baby?

- Ferrous sulfate is given by mouth.
- The amount of medicine to give has been carefully calculated based on your baby's weight and needed response from the medicine. Do not change the dosage without talking to your baby's provider.
- Dose Instructions: _____

What are possible side effects?

- Upset stomach
- Stomach pain
- Constipation
- Black stools (causes no harm to baby)
- Weakness
- Decreased appetite

What if my baby misses a dose or spits up the medication?

- Give the missed dose as soon as you remember it. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and stick to the regular medication schedule.
- Never give a double dose.
- Call your baby's healthcare provider if your baby misses two or more doses or spits up the medication.

Important Medication Safety Tips

- Only give your baby medicines prescribed by your baby's provider. Do not share prescription medicines with other children or adults.
- Check with your baby's provider before giving your baby any over-the-counter medicines.
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children, closed tightly in the bottle or container it came in, and with the label of directions given by the pharmacy.
- Give ferrous sulfate exactly as directed by your baby's provider.
 - Never stop ferrous sulfate or give more or less than prescribed without first talking with your baby's provider. Too little may not be enough to help and too much may cause harm. In case of overdose, immediately call the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222. If you cannot wake your baby or he or she has stopped breathing, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and call your local emergency medical services or 911 right away.
 - Store ferrous sulfate at room temperature and away from excess light, heat, and damp areas like the bathroom.
 - Mix ferrous sulfate with a small amount of breast milk or water to help make it easier on your baby's stomach.
 - Your baby may need to have blood tests while on this medication.
- Always use the five "rights" when giving medication to your baby:
 - Right baby (if other children are in the home)
 - Right medication



- Right amount (always measure the dose with the syringe or dropper provided by the pharmacy, not a common household teaspoon)
- Right time
- Right way (exactly as prescribed and directed by your baby's provider).

The above information is to help you better understand your baby's care. Always follow the instructions given by your baby's health-care provider and pharmacist. It's always OK to ask questions if you have concerns about your baby.

Online Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

HealthFinder.gov
www.healthfinder.gov

Institute for Safe Medication Practices
www.ismp.org/consumers

Kids Health
www.kidshealth.org

Medline Plus: Drug Information
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov