



# Iron preparations

**T**he BNF 79 states the following in relation to iron preparations:

- Treatment with an iron preparation is justified only in the presence of a demonstrable iron-deficiency state. Prophylaxis with an iron preparation may be appropriate in malabsorption, menorrhagia, pregnancy, gastrectomy, haemodialysis, and in the management of low birth-weight infants;
- The oral dose of elemental iron for iron-deficiency anaemia should be 100 to 200mg daily; and
- Modified-release preparations of iron are licensed for once daily dosage but have no therapeutic advantage and should not be used. The low incidence of side-effects may reflect the small amount of iron available for absorption as the iron is carried past the first part of the duodenum into an area of the gut where absorption is poor.

The following are iron preparations that are medicines and that are licensed and marketed in Ireland for the prevention and treatment of iron deficiency anaemias:

- Galfer 305mg Hard Capsules: Ferrous Fumarate 305mg (equivalent to 100mg elemental iron);
- Galfer 140mg/5ml Oral Suspension: each 5ml contains 140mg Ferrous Fumarate (equivalent to 45mg elemental iron); and
- Ferrograd 325mg Prolonged Release Tablets: each tablet contains Dried Ferrous Sulphate 325mg (elemental iron 105mg).
- Ferrous sulphate 200mg (elemental iron 65mg) twice daily; and
- Ferrous gluconate 300mg (elemental iron 35mg) four – six tablets daily.

Galfer, containing 305mg of ferrous fumarate, is the closest product we have in Ireland to the first/second line treatment options cited in that NHS document.

Dietary iron supplements are also available, which are not licensed medicines and are not intended for use in the treatment of iron deficiency. The following are examples of dietary iron supplements sold in pharmacies, and which contain significantly lower amounts of elemental iron than the licensed medicines:

The dosage of Galfer included in the SPC is one capsule (100mg elemental iron) twice daily for the treatment of iron deficiency, and one tablet once daily for prophylaxis.

The dosage of Ferrograd included in the SPC is one prolonged release tablet (105mg elemental iron) daily.

A *Guidance on prescribing iron supplements in primary care*, published by the NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group in 2017, included the following treatment advice for the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia:

- Active Iron – 200mg of active iron (38mg of iron sulphate, 13mg elemental iron);
- Spatone – 5mg elemental iron per sachet;
- Floradix – 15mg elemental iron per 20ml;
- Vitabiotics Feroglobin – 17mg elemental iron; and
- Sona Iron Complete – 20mg elemental iron per 10ml.
- First line – ferrous fumarate 210mg (elemental iron 68mg) twice daily;
- Second line – ferrous fumarate 322mg (elemental iron 100mg) twice daily;

The BNF recommendation of 100 – 200mg iron for the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia can be met by the use of Galfer capsules twice daily.