

Iron Preparations

Most iron preparations are indicated for the treatment of iron deficiency anaemia and would be supplied on prescription because, even on iron-deficient diet, iron deficiency is unlikely to develop without abnormal blood losses or long-term deprivation. Supplements are often prescribed to prevent iron deficiency, particularly in pregnancy. These may contain folic acid.

Ferrous salts are generally preferred to ferric salts as they are better absorbed. Ascorbic acid enhances the absorption of ferrous iron. Iron salts are astringent and may cause gastro-intestinal irritation and diarrhoea. Oral iron preparations may have a constipating effect in elderly patients.