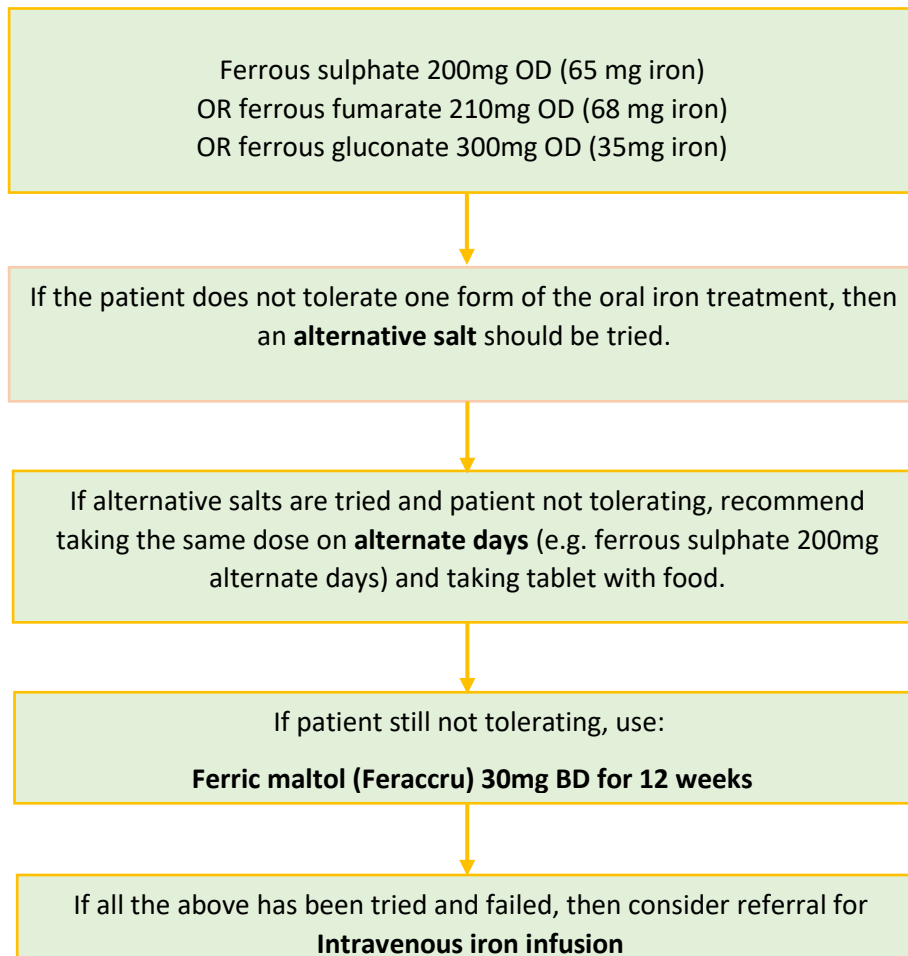


## TREATMENT OF IRON DEFICIENCY ANAEMIA IN ADULTS

1. **Establish deficiency:** British society of gastroenterology defines anaemia as haemoglobin (Hb) concentration below the lower limit of normal for relevant population and laboratory performing test.<sup>1</sup> It is defined as:
  - In men aged over 15 years - Hb below 130 g/L.
  - In non-pregnant women aged over 15 years - Hb below 120 g/L.
  - In pregnant women - Hb below 110 g/L throughout pregnancy. An Hb level of 110 g/L or more appears adequate in the first trimester, and a level of 105 g/L appears adequate in the second and third trimesters.
  - Postpartum - below 100 g/L.
2. **Treatment:** First line treatment as per NICE guidelines is once daily dose of oral iron preferably on an empty stomach. This should be continued for 3 months after iron deficiency has been corrected.<sup>2</sup>
3. **Monitoring:** NICE guideline recommends that haemoglobin levels (full blood count) should be checked after 2-4 weeks to assess the persons response to iron treatment. Thereafter, monitor full blood count periodically; 3 monthly for 12 months and then 6-monthly for 2-3 years.<sup>2</sup>

### Intolerance of oral iron

Patients may experience adverse effect from iron supplements, but these usually settle down with time. It may be prudent to warn patients of these at the point of prescribing. Adverse effects of iron include constipation, diarrhoea, epigastric pain, faecal impaction, gastrointestinal irritation and nausea.<sup>3</sup> If the patient experiences these and adherence becomes an issue, consider the step wise approach below. Parenteral iron should be reserved for instances where oral iron is contra-indicated, ineffective or not tolerated.



1. BSG Guidelines for the Management of Iron Deficiency Anaemia. BMJ 2021; 0:1–22
2. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Management of iron deficiency anaemia. NICE guideline. Nov 2021. Available from: [Management | Management | Anaemia - iron deficiency | CKS | NICE](#). [Accessed on: 27.06.23]
3. Joint Formulary Committee. British National Formulary 83rd ed. London: BMA & RPS; 2022.