

What is it?

Haemochromatosis causes the body to absorb too much iron from food. The condition is genetic, which means it is passed from parent to child. Some people with haemochromatosis will develop problems, while others won't. Haemochromatosis can lead to heart disease, diabetes and liver disease. However, treatment is simple.

What will my GP do?

Your GP will monitor your iron levels. If they are high, your GP may need to arrange for you to receive venesection. Venesection is removing a safe amount of blood to reduce the amount of iron in your body.

Your GP may also:

- Schedule regular check-ups to review your treatment
- Teach you about healthy lifestyle strategies and how to reduce your iron intake
- Screen your relatives for haemochromatosis
- Refer you to a specialist if you need more support

What can I do?

Continue to see your GP regularly. Follow your treatment plan. Talk to your GP about a specialist referral if you feel like your symptoms aren't improving. Avoid:

- **Iron supplements** – these may increase your iron levels
- **Vitamin C supplements** – may increase the amount of iron your body absorbs
- **Alcohol** – excessive alcohol use makes it harder for your GP to check your iron levels and may lead to unnecessary treatment

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Will donating blood help?
- What things should I avoid?
- What treatments can help?
- Who can I talk to if I need support?



What supports are available?

The **Australian Red Cross Blood Service** provides venesection to people who are eligible to donate blood. Your GP can register you with the program and they will contact you to make an appointment.

South Western Sydney Local Health District also provides venesection through the hospital ambulatory care units if the patient is ineligible to donate blood.

Some general practices also run their own venesection clinics. Your GP will refer you to whichever is appropriate for you.

The **My Iron Manager App** helps you manage your treatment for haemochromatosis. It includes a directory of blood donation centres, an online tool for recording your blood test results and venesection history, and a calendar for managing your appointments. All data is stored on the device and not uploaded to the internet. The app is safe, secure and easy to use. [Download the app here.](#)

Where can I learn more?

- **Australian Red Cross Lifeblood** – I need to know about haemochromatosis: transfusion.com.au
- **Haemochromatosis Australia**: haemochromatosis.org.au
- **Haemochromatosis Australia** – haemochromatosis explained (video): haemochromatosis.org.au