

EUROPEAN IRON DEFICIENCY SURVEY

Patient Discussion Guide



Know iron deficiency— don't let it go undiagnosed.

The European Iron Deficiency Survey results highlight the impact iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia have on people's quality of life, both physically and mentally. The survey also showed that people don't seek treatment until they have suffered for some time, and that they may not get a confirmed diagnosis or treatment for months after that.

To help you raise the topic of iron deficiency with your doctor, print out this discussion guide and use it to note down how you feel and anything you would like to happen at your next appointment with your doctor. The first section is if you think you may have some symptoms of iron deficiency/iron deficiency anaemia and want to find out what to do next. The second section is if you have been to your doctor, but maybe aren't feeling any better.

Results from the survey have been listed as an idea of what other patients have experienced or how they feel so you know you are not alone. Use the other columns to write exactly how you feel, and what the goals of your appointment are. Examples have been given to get you started.

Iron Deficiency
Don't let it go undiagnosed

Know iron deficiency



What did the European Iron Deficiency Survey find?	My current situation	My aims for my next appointment
79% of patients reported tiredness/fatigue as one of the first symptoms to appear. ¹		
38% of patients listed paleness as one of the first symptoms to appear. ¹		
30% of patients noticed a poor level of concentration as a first symptom. ¹		
28% of patients suffer from heavy menstrual bleeding in addition to their iron deficiency. ¹		
People waited on average 9 months after symptoms started to go and see their doctor. ²		

Don't let it go undiagnosed



What did the European Iron Deficiency Survey find?	My current situation	My aims for my next appointment
<p>After visiting the doctor, it took approximately 6 months for patients to get a confirmed diagnosis of ID or IDA.²</p>		
<p>Following diagnosis, 65% of physicians recommend an iron rich diet.³</p>		
<p>Around half of patients stated that their iron deficiency stops them from being active.³</p>		
<p>49% of patients felt that their ID/IDA impacted on their work.^{1,2}</p>		

These examples are designed to help you assess signs of iron deficiency and help you explain to your doctor how they are affecting your life. Some of these symptoms are common. In particular fatigue is often mentioned when the patients visit their doctors.⁴ Fatigue is associated with many different underlying conditions, such as:

- Iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia⁵
- Anaemia due to other reasons, such as low levels of vitamin B12 or folate⁶
- Hormonal conditions such as hypothyroidism and diabetes⁷
- Chronic fatigue syndrome, also called myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)⁸
- Depression^{8,9} and sleep problems¹⁰
- Iron overload, known as haemochromatosis,¹¹ where too much iron can lead to iron building up in the organs of your body.¹²

It is important that you talk to your doctor to discuss how you feel in more detail. Your doctor is in the best position to make a diagnosis and to discuss all possible treatment options with you; it is also important to mention any particular issues or long-term medical conditions that may be contributing to your symptoms. If you are diagnosed as being iron deficient, it is important that your doctor follows up as to why you are iron deficient, as the answer to this question can determine the most effective course of treatment.



IronDeficiency.com is intended to provide educational information to an international audience, at the exclusion of US residents. All information contained therein is intended for educational purposes only and should not be used to replace a discussion with a healthcare professional. All decisions regarding patient care must be handled by a healthcare professional, and be made based on the unique needs of each patient.

1. Caramelo L, Mezzacasa A and Mansour D. Iron Deficiency. Impact of iron deficiency on QoL and work capacity. EHA 21st Annual Congress, 9-12 June 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark. **2.** Caramelo L, Mezzacasa A and Kassebaum NJ. Iron Deficiency. Understanding perceptions of sufferers and the general public. EHA 21st Annual Congress, 9-12 June 2016, Copenhagen, Denmark. **3.** The European iron deficiency survey. Data on file; 2016, Vifor Pharma. **4.** Ridsdale L, Evans a, Jerrett W, Mandalia S, Osler K, Vora H. Patients with fatigue in general practice: a prospective study. *BMJ*. 1993;307(6896):103-6. **5.** Wood MM, Elwood PC. Symptoms of iron deficiency anaemia: A community survey. *Br J Prev Soc Med*. 1966;20:117-121. **6.** Smith DL. Anemia in the elderly. *Am Fam Physician*. 2000;62(7):1565-727. **7.** Nijrolder I, van der Windt D, de Vries H, van der Horst H. Diagnoses during follow-up of patients presenting with fatigue in primary care. *CMAJ*. 2009;181(10):683-7. doi:10.1503/cmaj.090647. **8.** Lewis G, Wessely S. The epidemiology of fatigue: More questions than answers. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 1992;46:92-97. **9.** Targum SD, Fava M. Fatigue as a Residual Symptom of Depression. *Innov Clin Neurosci*. 2011;8(10):40-43. **10.** Åkerstedt T, Knutsson A, Westerholm P, Theorell T, Alfredsson L, Kecklund G. Mental fatigue, work and sleep. *J Psychosom Res*. 2004;57(5):427-43. **11.** McDonnell SM, Preston BL, Jewell SA, et al. A survey of 2,851 patients with hemochromatosis: symptoms and response to treatment. *Am J Med*. 1999;106(6):619-24. **12.** Schümann K, Elsenhans B, Mäurer a. Iron supplementation. *J Trace Elem Med Biol*. 1998;12(3):129-40. doi:10.1016/S0946-672X(98)80001-1.