

acidic environment of the upper GI tract. A citrus fruit or juice taken with the medication aids in absorption.

Drug Alert

Cow's milk contains substances that bind the iron and interfere with absorption. Iron supplements should not be administered with milk or milk products ([Carley, 2003](#); [Powers and Buchanan, 2014](#)).

An adequate dosage of oral iron turns the stools a tarry green or black color. The nurse advises parents of this normally expected change and inquires about its occurrence on follow-up visits. Absence of the greenish black stool may be a clue to poor compliance (e.g., in schedule, in dosage, in administration, in side effects). If compliance is an issue, make every effort to institute strategies to improve adherence to the medication regimen, such as changing the schedule to more convenient times.

Drug Alert

Liquid preparations of iron may temporarily stain the teeth. If possible, the medication should be taken through a straw or given through a syringe or medicine dropper placed toward the back of the mouth. Brushing the teeth after administration of the drug lessens the discoloration.

Nursing Alert

Because iron ingestion in excessive quantities is toxic or even fatal, parents should be instructed to keep no more than a month's supply in the home and store it safely away from the reach of children.

If parenteral iron preparations are prescribed, iron dextran must be injected deeply into a large muscle mass using the Z-track method. The injection site is *not* massaged after injection to minimize skin staining and irritation. Because no more than 1 ml should be given in one injection site, the IV route should be considered to avoid multiple injections. Careful observation with IV