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Get To Know: Irish Iron Specialist Solvotrin Therapeutics

by David Ridley

Irish firm Solvotrin Therapeutics markets its Active Iron supplement brand across 14 international markets including the UK, US and China.

County Cork's Solvotrin Therapeutics claims to have developed a form of iron that is both gentle on the stomach and highly bioavailable.

The top-selling iron supplement brand in its home country, Ireland, Active Iron is now available in 14 international markets including the US and China, and is through line extensions expanding its presence in the women's health category.

In addition to women's health, Solvotrin also sees opportunities in professional sports, with its Active Iron Advance product used by Olympic athletes and big name football players, the firm tells HBW Insight.

Q What is the history of the company?

A Iron deficiency affects 2.1bn people globally. Recognizing a significant global need for an effective oral iron solution, our team of scientists developed Active Iron. Using a unique and now patented formulation that delivers both efficacy and tolerability, we closed a gap in the market. Medicinal, or high-dose iron, causes side effects in 80% of people. As a result, 50% stop taking it, choosing to suffer with the symptoms of low iron over constipation and wider gut irritation typically caused by oral iron. Most iron supplements contain a much lower dose of iron which is why they can avoid these common side effects. However, they often do not provide sufficient iron to increase iron levels, with some only containing 5mg iron per serving. Active Iron is highly

absorbed compared to other iron supplements, making it gentle on the stomach and clinical results have shown that it increases iron levels by 94%. Since launching in 2017 in Boots, Active Iron has had a strong growth trajectory and is available internationally across 14 markets including the US and China. It is now the number-one iron supplement brand in Ireland.

Q What are your biggest selling products?

A We have a range of nine products all delivering tailored nutritional solutions. The original Active Iron 14mg remains incredibly popular, but in 2022 we launched Active Iron Advance 25mg which delivers an 80% higher dose, without impacting tolerability. We also have the multi-award-winning Active Iron Pregnancy Plus, which delivers a complete nutritional solution for mum and baby, and contains 25mg iron, omega 3 and a multivitamin combination tailored for pregnancy. Our UK bestseller is Active Iron Women, which is a combination of our iron and a tailored multivitamin that delivers a tangible benefit on energy levels and supports women's nutritional needs throughout all life stages.

Q Are you planning any investments behind these brands in the near future?

A We operate an always-on digital program and have ongoing retailer specific activity plans. Next year, we will continue to promote our "Better Days. Period." campaign, which is designed to prompt conversations around period health and to change the narrative about symptoms such as menstrual fatigue, which 64% of menstruating women experience, according to a survey we conducted with over 2,000 women.

Q What are the opportunities/challenges for growth in consumer healthcare today?

A The commercial opportunity is huge in women's health. Currently there is a lack of education and awareness around menstruation, even among women. By opening up conversations around disruptive period symptoms, we can empower women to take charge of their cycle and avoid common symptoms such as menstrual fatigue, which may be a result of low iron levels. In the UK, for example, over 3m women aged 20 to

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50 years old shop for period health products in Sainsburys supermarkets. Many won't have considered the importance of maintaining strong iron levels. Additionally, we're seeing great growth in professional sport, with Olympic athletes and first-team football club players now using Active Iron Advance, due to its efficacy, tolerability and clinical evidence.

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