

UNDERSTANDING ANEMIA



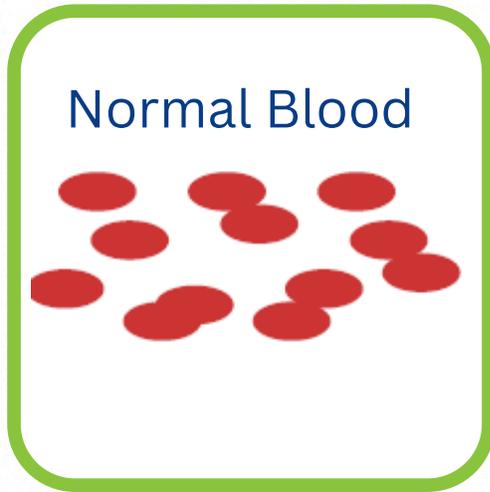
A Patient Guide



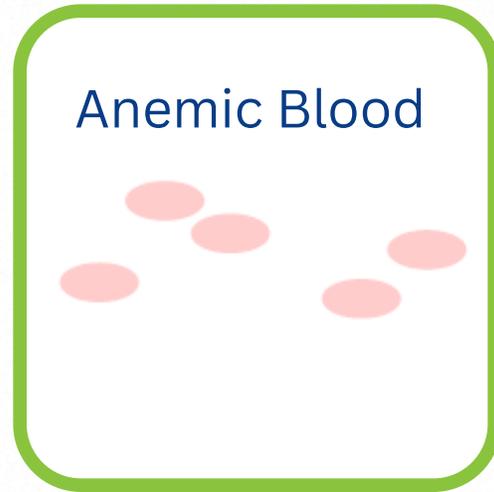


UNDERSTANDING ANEMIA

A Patient Guide



Many red blood cells



Fewer red blood cells

This booklet will help you learn about anemia. You will find out what causes it, how it is treated, and what you can do to feel better.

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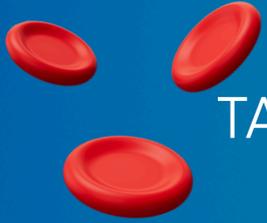


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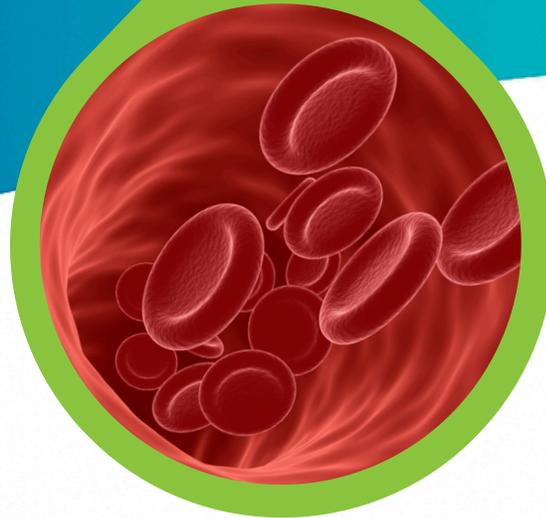


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WHAT IS ANEMIA?



Anemia happens when your blood does not have enough healthy red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen from your lungs to all parts of your body.

When you have anemia, your body does not get enough oxygen. This can make you feel tired and weak. Anemia is very common. It affects about 3 million Americans.

Think of it this way: Red blood cells are like tiny delivery trucks. They pick up oxygen in your lungs and deliver it to every part of your body. If you don't have enough trucks, some parts of your body don't get the oxygen they need.

Key Terms to Know

Hemoglobin: A protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. Doctors check this with a blood test.

Red Blood Cells: Cells in your blood that carry oxygen to your body.

References:

1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "What Is Anemia?" NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia>
2. American Society of Hematology. "Anemia." Hematology.org. <https://www.hematology.org/education/patients/anemia>
3. Mayo Clinic. "Anemia - Symptoms and Causes." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20351360>

TYPES OF ANEMIA



Anemia often starts slowly. You may not notice symptoms at first. As it gets worse, you may feel some of these signs:

Head and Brain

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Trouble thinking clearly

General Body

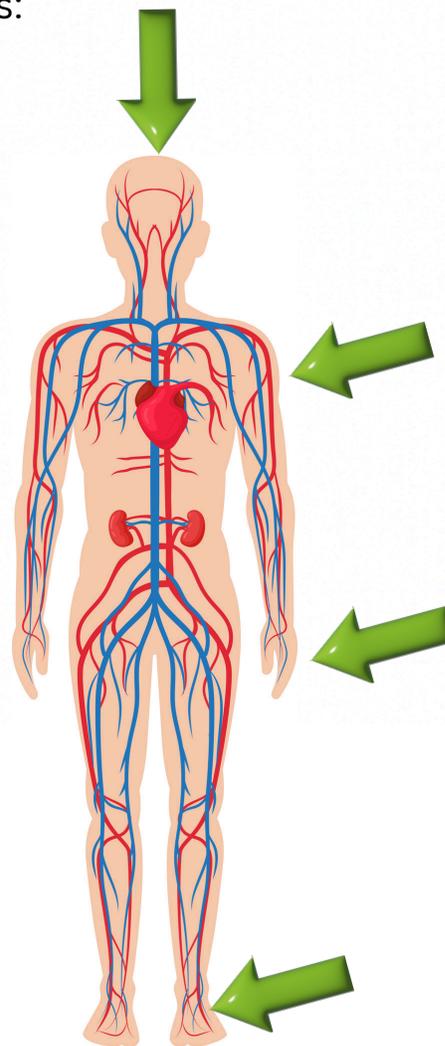
- Fatigue (feeling very tired)
- Weakness
- Pale skin

Heart and Chest

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fast heartbeat

Hands, Feet, and Nails

- Cold hands and feet
- Brittle nails
- Restless legs



Important: Some people with anemia have no symptoms at all. That's why blood tests are so important. Many people find out they have anemia during a routine check-up.

References:

1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Anemia - Symptoms." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/symptoms>
2. Mayo Clinic. "Anemia - Symptoms and Causes." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20351360>



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



Anemia often starts slowly. You may not notice symptoms at first.	As it gets worse, you may feel some of these signs:
IRON DEFICIENCY	Not enough iron to make hemoglobin Common Causes: Low iron diet, blood loss, pregnancy
VITAMIN DEFICIENCY	Not enough B12 or folate Common Causes: Poor diet, absorption problems
CHRONIC DISEASE	Other illness affects red blood cell production Common Causes: Kidney disease, cancer, arthritis
APLASTIC	Bone marrow doesn't make enough cells Common Causes: Infections, medicines, autoimmune
HEMOLYTIC	Red blood cells destroyed too fast Common Causes: Inherited conditions, infections

References: 1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Types of Anemia." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/types> 2. Mayo Clinic. "Iron deficiency anemia." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/iron-deficiency-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355034> 3. American Society of Hematology. "Iron-Deficiency Anemia." Hematology.org. <https://www.hematology.org/education/patients/anemia/iron-deficiency>

CAUSES OF ANEMIA



Understanding what causes anemia helps you and your doctor find the best treatment:

Not Getting Enough Nutrients

- Not eating enough iron-rich foods
- Low vitamin B12 or folate
- Strict diets that cut out food groups

Blood Loss

- Heavy menstrual periods
- Bleeding in the stomach or intestines
- Surgery or injury
- Donating blood often

Health Conditions

- Kidney disease
- Cancer and cancer treatments
- Celiac disease, Crohn's disease
- Inherited blood disorders



How is Anemia Found?

Your doctor will use blood tests to check for anemia:

CBC (Complete Blood Count)

What It Checks: Counts all your blood cells

Normal Range: Varies by cell type

Hemoglobin

What It Checks: Oxygen-carrying protein in red cells

Normal Range: Men: 13.5-17.5 g/dL | Women: 12.0-15.5 g/dL

Ferritin

What It Checks: Iron storage in your body

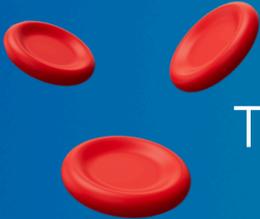
Normal Range: Men: 30-400 ng/mL | Women: 13-150 ng/mL

Reticulocyte Count

What It Checks: New red blood cells being made

Normal Range: 0.5-2.5%

Finding the Cause: *Once anemia is found, your doctor may order more tests to find out why. This might include checking for internal bleeding or celiac disease.*



TREATMENT OPTIONS



Treatment depends on what type of anemia you have:



Step 1: See Your Doctor



Step 2: Get Blood Tests



Step 3: Start Treatment



Step 4: Follow Up Regularly

1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Anemia - Diagnosis." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/diagnosis> 2. Mayo Clinic. "Complete blood count (CBC)." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/complete-blood-count/about/pac-20384919> 3. MedlinePlus. "Ferritin Blood Test." MedlinePlus.gov. <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/ferritin-blood-test/>

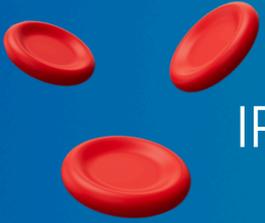
COMMON TREATMENTS



Treatment depends on what type of anemia you have:

IRON PILLS	Most common treatment for iron deficiency. Take for 3-6 months.
IV IRON	Iron given through a vein if pills don't work or cause problems.
VITAMIN B12 SHOTS OR PILLS	For B12 deficiency anemia.
FOLIC ACID SUPPLEMENTS	For folate deficiency.
EPD INJECTIONS	Helps your body make more red blood cells (for kidney disease).

1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Anemia - Diagnosis." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/diagnosis> 2. Mayo Clinic. "Complete blood count (CBC)." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/complete-blood-count/about/pac-20384919> 3. MedlinePlus. "Ferritin Blood Test." MedlinePlus.gov. <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/ferritin-blood-test/>



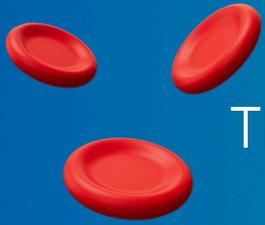
IRON-RICH FOODS



Eating the right foods can help prevent and treat iron deficiency anemia:

HEME IRON (From Animals- Best Absorbed)	NON-HEME IRON (From Plants)
BEEF	BEANS AND LENTILS
CHICKEN, TURKEY (DARK MEAT)	TOFU
FISH & SHELLFISH	SPINACH AND KALE
LIVER	FORTIFIED CEREALS
EGGS	DRIED FRUITS

1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Anemia - Diagnosis." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/diagnosis> 2. Mayo Clinic. "Complete blood count (CBC)." MayoClinic.org. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/complete-blood-count/about/pac-20384919> 3. MedlinePlus. "Ferritin Blood Test." MedlinePlus.gov. <https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/ferritin-blood-test/>



TIPS FOR TAKING IRON PILLS



- Take iron on an empty stomach if you can
- Take iron with vitamin C (orange juice) to help absorption
- Take iron in the morning when absorption is best
- Store iron pills away from children
- Be patient - it takes 2-3 months to see full results
- Keep taking iron even after you feel better



- Take iron with milk, calcium, or antacids
- Take iron with coffee, tea, or high-fiber foods
- Take more than prescribed
- Stop taking iron without talking to your doctor

Common Side Effects: *Upset stomach, constipation, dark stools (normal), metallic taste.*

If side effects bother you: Try taking iron with a small snack or ask your doctor about a different form.



WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR



! CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IF YOU HAVE:

- Severe chest pain
- Trouble breathing at rest
- Fainting or passing out
- Very fast heartbeat that won't slow down
- Heavy bleeding that won't stop

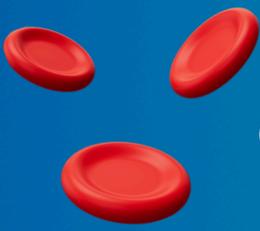
! CALL YOUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE IF:

- Your symptoms are getting worse
- You have new symptoms
- You can't tolerate your iron pills
- You see blood in your stool
- You feel much more tired than usual



*Keep Your Follow-Up Appointments!
Your doctor will check your blood regularly to make sure treatment is working.*

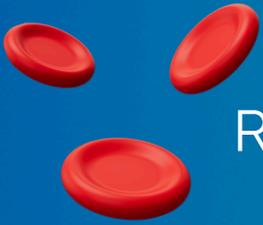
1. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Anemia - Causes." NHLBI, NIH. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/causes> 2. World Health Organization. "Anaemia." WHO.int. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/anaemia> 3. American Academy of Family Physicians. "Anemia." FamilyDoctor.org. <https://familydoctor.org/condition/anemia/>



GLOSSARY



ANEMIA	Not enough healthy red blood cells
BONE MARROW	Tissue inside bones that makes blood cells
CBC	Blood test counting your blood cells
FERRITIN	Protein that stores iron
FOLATE	B vitamin needed for red blood cells
HEMOGLOBIN	Protein in red cells that carries oxygen
IRON DEFICIENCY	Not enough iron in your body
IV	Medicine given through a vein
MCV	Average size of red blood cells
PICA	Craving to eat non-food items
RED BLOOD CELLS	Cells that carry oxygen
RETICULOCYTES	Young, new red blood cells



RESOURCES



Learn More:

- MedlinePlus - Anemia: medlineplus.gov/anemia.html
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia
- American Society of Hematology:
hematology.org/education/patients/anemia
- Mayo Clinic: mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anemia
- Cleveland Clinic: my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/3929-anemia



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This booklet is for informational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment.

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