



SUPPLEMENTS

If your physician has prescribed oral iron, please consider these reminders:

- Take iron supplement on an empty stomach with citrus juices which may increase iron absorption.
- Iron can be taken with food but food will decrease absorption of iron by 50%.
- Take 250 mg of Vitamin C every day which may increase iron absorption.
- Do not drink coffee and tea within one hour of taking iron.
- Taking iron with meals along with fiber and roughage and 6-8oz water will help reduce constipation and cramping.
- Iron can cause dark stools.
- Notify your physician if you experience bright red blood, vomiting diarrhea, tarry stools, weak and rapid pulse or lethargy.
- Keep all iron medications out of reach of children at all times.

CONSULTATION

Speak with your doctor about the treatment plan that is right for you. If you are anticipating surgery, discuss ways you can build your strength and blood counts before the operation. Discuss any medication(s) you are using, such as:

- Prescription and over-the-counter medications— including steroids or anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin.
- Dietary supplements.
- Herbal products.

Ask your doctor if you should you stop using blood-thinning medication before or after surgery.



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ANEMIA

TREATMENT
STRATEGIES
YOU SHOULD
KNOW



WHAT IS ANEMIA?

ANEMIA is a condition that indicates there are not enough red blood cells in your circulation to transport sufficient amounts of oxygen to your body's tissues. Oxygen acts like fuel—it provides energy for your muscles and organs to work. With anemia, other body systems have to compensate to deliver an adequate amount of oxygen to the tissues. For example, the heart beats faster and breathing becomes more rapid as the lungs take in air.

SYMPTOMS OF ANEMIA

- Extreme fatigue and weakness, feeling tired.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Shortness of breath.
- Rapid heartbeat.
- Headache.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- Paleness.

WHAT CAUSES ANEMIA? Normally, your body makes enough red cells, but certain diseases, treatments, and conditions can cause the under-production of red blood cells. Some examples:

- Lack of vitamin B12 in your diet.
- Lack of folic acid in your diet.
- Blood loss from an injury.
- An inherited blood disorder, such as sickle cell anemia.
- Excessive destruction of red blood cells.
- Cancer.
- Treatments for cancer, such as chemotherapy.
- Excessive bleeding from periods.

DETECTING ANEMIA

Your doctor can perform blood tests, such as a CBC (Complete Blood Count) to determine if you are anemic. A CBC will include hematocrit (HCT) and hemoglobin (HGB), two ways of measuring your red blood cell count.

WHAT IS HEMOGLOBIN?

Red blood cells are red because they contain hemoglobin. The test for hemoglobin (HGB) is considered to be an index of the red cell concentration in your blood and thus an indirect measure of the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. It is important for you to know your HGB count.

KNOW YOUR HEMOGLOBIN COUNT

Hemoglobin (HGB) is measured in grams per deciliter. Thus, the HGB range is 14 g/dl to 18g/dl for men and 12 g/dl to 16 g/dl for women. If your hemoglobin count is lower than the normal range, ask your doctor about treatment to raise your HGB count.

TREATMENTS

Traditional treatment of advanced anemia frequently relies on blood transfusion. However, treating anemia can be achieved with the proper combination and management of medications and good nutrition. For example:

MEDICATIONS

IRON is essential in building red blood cells.

- Oral – taken by mouth and absorbed through the digestive tract. Not all preparations are the same and contain varying amounts of elemental iron and other ingredients. (See Oral Iron Supplement reminders).
- Intravenous – infused into the vein for rapid delivery to patients whose iron stores are severely depleted or who cannot tolerate oral iron. Several preparations are now available;

must be administered by qualified, medical personnel—usually in a hospital.

ERYTHROPOIETIN (EPO) is a hormone produced primarily by the kidney that stimulates the formation of red blood cells in the bone marrow. A genetically engineered version, known as Procrit® or Epogen® is now available to boost patient's blood production, elevating hematocrit levels and used in priming your body before surgery. Because this medication uses the iron stores in your body, there must be adequate iron replacement for the best response.

FOLIC ACID a vitamin that stimulates the production of blood cells.

VITAMIN B12 found in food that is essential for growth, cell production, and other functions in the body. It is used to treat types of anemias, cancers, liver/kidney disease, and bleeding.

NUTRITION

Food rich in iron can help prevent iron deficiency anemia. All meals should be consumed with foods containing Vitamin C to improve iron absorption. Foods containing vitamin B12 and folic acid will assist in red blood cell formation and maturation.

EXCELLENT SOURCES OF IRON Beef, veal, oysters, tuna, calf/beef liver, chicken, sardines, scallops, pork, chicken liver, clams, mackerel, turkey, lamb, shrimp, salmon, iron fortified cereals.

GOOD SOURCES OF IRON Beans: Lima, lentils, peas, soybeans, baked beans; greens: mustard, turnip, beet, collard; dried fruit: apricots, prunes, raisins, peaches, dates; eggs, spinach, chard, whole and enriched grains; blackstrap molasses.

BEST SOURCES OF VITAMIN C (ASCORBIC ACID) Lemons, oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, limes and 100% juices of these fruits; mango, papaya, honeydew, cantaloupe, strawberries, kiwi; tomatoes, spinach, greens, broccoli, green peppers, chili peppers, Brussels sprouts.

BEST SOURCES OF VITAMIN B12 All meats, liver and dairy products.

BEST SOURCES OF FOLIC ACID Livers, asparagus, leafy green vegetables, spinach, dried beans, whole wheat, wheat bran, wheat germ, yeast, oranges, broccoli and cabbage.