

Anemia

Patient education

What is anemia?

Anemia is a condition in which the blood contains insufficient red blood cells or hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is an oxygen-carrying protein found in red blood cells. When you don't have enough red blood cells or hemoglobin, your body does not get enough oxygen and your organs may not function properly. As a result, you may experience extreme fatigue or other issues.

What can cause anemia?

- Excessive bleeding (inside or outside the body)
 - Bleeding from intestine or heavy menstrual periods (females)
- Chronic kidney, thyroid and liver disease
- Bone marrow or blood disorder
- Cancer and cancer treatments
- HIV/AIDS
- Infections
- Medications
- Autoimmune diseases

What increases the risks?

- Menstruating or pregnant
- Chronic medical conditions
- You are over the age of 65

How do I know that I have anemia?

- Feeling weak
- Dizziness
- Headache, as well as difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Irregular or faster-than-normal heartbeats
- Shortness of breath, particularly during exercise
- Cold hands and feet, as well as pale skin, lips, and nails

- Nausea and indigestion

How is this treated?

- Treatment is dependent on the underlying cause
- If there are nutritional deficiencies then iron, vitamin B12, or folic acid supplementation can help
- In cases of severe anemia, blood transfusions may be necessary

If you have been diagnosed with anemia, please contact your doctor or health care provider immediately if you are experiencing any of the following:

- You experience new bleeding anywhere in your body

If you have been diagnosed with anemia, please get help immediately if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Feeling weak
- Have shortness of breath
- abdominal or chest pain
- Feeling dizzy
- Have trouble concentrating
- Have bloody stools, black stools, or tarry stools
- You vomit repeatedly or you vomit up blood

Where can I get more information?

- Anemia and Iron-Deficiency
Website: <https://www.healthing.ca/other/iron-deficiency-anemia>

Reference: Anemia. (2021, June 07). Elsevier Inc: ClinicalKey for Nursing.

Retrieved from https://www.clinicalkey.com/nursing/#!/content/patient_handout/5-s2.0-pe_d3795e0b-2674-4b01-8c8f-46c899375d99