

Understanding Anemia

Summary: Anemia occurs when your blood does not carry enough oxygen to the rest of your body. The most common cause is a lack of iron, which is needed to make hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is an iron-rich protein that gives blood its red color and carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body.

Causes of Anemia:

1. **Blood Loss:** Heavy periods, ulcers, colon polyps, or colon cancer.
2. **Lack of Red Blood Cell Production:** Poor diet lacking iron, folic acid, or vitamin B12; pregnancy; inherited disorders.
3. **High Rates of Red Blood Cell Destruction:** Blood disorders like sickle cell anemia, thalassemia, or cancer; conditions like aplastic anemia and G6PD deficiency.

Symptoms of Anemia:

- Tiredness
- Feeling cold
- Dizziness
- Irritability
- Shortness of breath
- Headaches

Diagnosis: Doctors diagnose anemia through a physical exam and blood tests. Common tests include:

- **Complete Blood Count (CBC)**
- **Iron Tests**
- **Ferritin Blood Test**
- **Vitamin B Test**
- **Blood Smear**
- **Bone Marrow Test**

Treatment: Treatment depends on the type of anemia and may include:

- **Iron Supplements:** [Iron Information](#)
- **Vitamin B12 Supplements:** [Vitamin B12 Information](#)
- **Treatments for Blood Disorders:** [Blood Disorder Treatments](#)

Additional Resources

Start Here:

- [Anemia Overview](#)
- [Anemia Information](#)

- [What Is Anemia?](#)
- [Your Guide to Anemia](#)

Related Issues:

- [Anemia in Chronic Kidney Disease](#)
- [Craving and Chewing Ice: A Sign of Anemia?](#)
- [Low Red Blood Cell Counts \(Anemia\)](#)

Specific Types of Anemia:

- [Iron-Deficiency Anemia](#)
- [Vitamin B12-Deficiency Anemia](#)
- [Hemolytic Anemia](#)

For Different Age Groups:

- **Children:** [Anemia in Children](#)
- **Teenagers:** [Anemia for Teens](#)
- **Women:** [Anemia in Women](#)
- **Older Adults:** [Anemia in Older Adults](#)

Find an Expert:

- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)

Patient Handouts

- [Anemia Overview](#)
- [Iron Deficiency Anemia](#)
- [Vitamin B12 Deficiency Anemia](#)

For more detailed information, you can explore the provided links and resources. If you have any specific questions or need further assistance, please consult with a healthcare professional.

Source: [MedlinePlus](#)