

ANEMIA



My Health
Digest

Anemia

Anemia is a condition in which you lack enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to your body's tissues. Having anemia, also referred to as low hemoglobin, can make you feel tired and weak.

There are many forms of anemia, each with its own cause. Anemia can be temporary or long term and can range from mild to severe. In most cases, anemia has more than one cause. See your doctor if you suspect that you have anemia. It can be a warning sign of serious illness.

What are the types of anemia?

- Aplastic anemia
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Sickle cell anemia
- Thalassemia
- Vitamin deficiency anemia



What are the symptoms?

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Pale or yellowish skin
- Irregular heartbeats
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain
- Cold hands and feet
- Headaches

At first, anemia can be so mild that you don't notice it. But symptoms worsen as anemia worsens.

When to see a doctor

Make an appointment with your doctor if you feel fatigued and you don't know why.

Fatigue has many causes besides anemia, so don't assume that if you're tired you must be anemic. Some people learn that their hemoglobin is low, which indicates anemia



What are the causes of anemia?

This can happen if:

- Your body doesn't make enough red blood cells
- Bleeding causes you to lose red blood cells more quickly than they can be replaced
- Your body destroys red blood cells



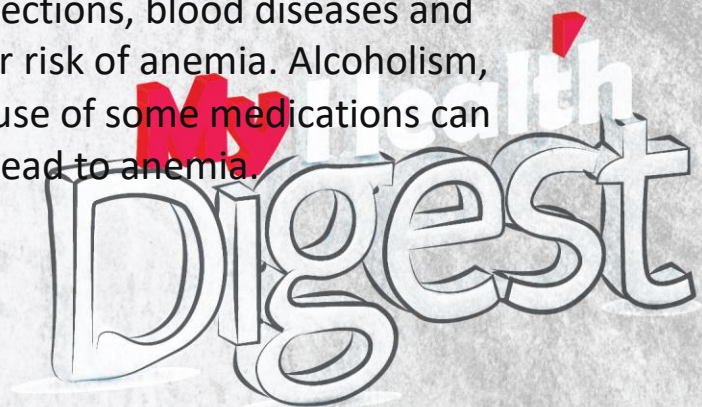
What are anemia risk factors?

These factors place you at increased risk of anemia:

- **A diet lacking in certain vitamins and minerals.** A diet consistently low in iron, vitamin B-12, folate and copper increases your risk of anemia.
- **Intestinal disorders.** Having an intestinal disorder that affects the absorption of nutrients in your small intestine — such as Crohn's disease and celiac disease — puts you at risk of anemia.
- **Menstruation.** In general, women who haven't had menopause have a greater risk of iron deficiency anemia than do men and postmenopausal women. Menstruation causes the loss of red blood cells.
- **Pregnancy.** Being pregnant and not taking a multivitamin with folic acid and iron, increases your risk of anemia.
- **Chronic conditions.** If you have cancer, kidney failure or another chronic condition, you could be at risk of anemia of chronic disease. These conditions can lead to a shortage of red blood cells.

Slow, chronic blood loss from an ulcer or other source within your body can deplete your body's store of iron, leading to iron deficiency anemia.

- **Family history.** If your family has a history of an inherited anemia, such as sickle cell anemia, you also might be at increased risk of the condition.
- **Other factors.** A history of certain infections, blood diseases and autoimmune disorders increases your risk of anemia. Alcoholism, exposure to toxic chemicals and the use of some medications can affect red blood cell production and lead to anemia.



- **Age.** People over age 65 are at increased risk of anemia.

Anemia prevention

Many types of anemia can't be prevented. But you can avoid iron deficiency anemia and vitamin deficiency anemias by eating a diet that includes a variety of vitamins and minerals.

