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Aplastic Anemia

What is aplastic anemia?

Aplastic anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/anemia.html>] is a rare but serious blood disorder. If you have it, your **bone marrow** [<https://medlineplus.gov/bonemarrowdiseases.html>] doesn't make enough new blood cells. It happens when there is damage to stem cells inside your bone marrow. There are different types of aplastic anemia, including Fanconi anemia.

What causes aplastic anemia?

The causes of aplastic anemia can include:

- Autoimmune disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/autoimmunediseases.html>] , which are the most common cause
- Certain inherited gene changes, such as the one that can cause Fanconi anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/fanconi-anemia/>]
- Toxic substances, such as pesticides [<https://medlineplus.gov/pesticides.html>] , arsenic [<https://medlineplus.gov/arsenic.html>] , and benzene
- Radiation therapy [<https://medlineplus.gov/radiationtherapy.html>] and chemotherapy [<https://medlineplus.gov/cancerchemotherapy.html>] for cancer
- Certain medicines
- Viral infections such as hepatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/hepatitis.html>] , Epstein-Barr virus, or HIV [<https://medlineplus.gov/hiv.html>]
- Pregnancy

In many people, the cause is unknown. This is called idiopathic aplastic anemia.

What are the symptoms of aplastic anemia?

Aplastic anemia can develop suddenly or slowly. It can be mild or severe. The symptoms of aplastic anemia can include:

- Fatigue [<https://medlineplus.gov/fatigue.html>]
- Weakness
- Dizziness [<https://medlineplus.gov/dizzinessandvertigo.html>]
- Shortness of breath [<https://medlineplus.gov/breathingproblems.html>]
- Easy bruising [<https://medlineplus.gov/bruises.html>] or bleeding [<https://medlineplus.gov/bleeding.html>]

What other problems can aplastic anemia cause?

Aplastic anemia can cause other problems, including frequent infections and bleeding. It raises your risk of developing a serious blood disorder [<https://medlineplus.gov/blooddisorders.html>] .

If not treated, aplastic anemia can also lead to heart problems such as an arrhythmia [<https://medlineplus.gov/arrhythmia.html>] (a problem with the rate or rhythm of your heartbeat), an enlarged heart, or heart failure [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartfailure.html>] .

How is aplastic anemia diagnosed?

To find out if you have aplastic anemia, your doctor will:

- Take your medical and your family medical histories
- Do a physical exam
- Order tests, such as tests to check if you have low numbers of cells in your bone marrow and blood

What are the treatments for aplastic anemia?


If you have aplastic anemia, your doctor will create a treatment plan for you. The plan will be based on how severe the anemia is and what is causing it. Treatments can include:

- Blood transfusions [<https://medlineplus.gov/bloodtransfusionanddonation.html>]
- Blood and marrow stem cell transplants [<https://medlineplus.gov/stemcells.html>]
- Medicines to suppress your immune system




Because of the risk of blood disorders, your doctor will monitor your condition and screen you for blood disorders regularly.

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- **Aplastic Anemia** [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/anemia/aplastic-anemia>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/anemia/anemia-aplasica>]
- **Aplastic Anemia: Symptoms and Conditions** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/aplastic-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355015?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/aplastic-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355015?p=1>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- **Blood Tests** [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/blood-tests>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/analisis-de-sangre>]
- **Complete Blood Count (CBC)** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/complete-blood-count-cbc/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/conteo-sanguineo-completo/>]
- **Reticulocyte Count** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/reticulocyte-count/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/conteo-de-reticulocitos/>]


Treatments and Therapies

- **Iron Chelation** [<https://www.aamds.org/treatment/iron-chelation>] (Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation)
- **Treatments for Blood Disorders** [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/blood-bone-marrow-treatments>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/sangre-y-medula-osea-tratamientos>]
- **What Are the Treatments for Aplastic Anemia?** [<https://www.aamds.org/questions/what-are-treatments-aplastic-anemia#>] (Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation)

Related Issues


- **Special Issues for People with Aplastic Anemia** [<https://www.aamds.org/about/aplastic-anemia/special-issues>] (Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation)

Specifics


- **Aplastic Anemia and Myelodysplastic Syndromes** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/blood-diseases/aplastic-anemia-myelodysplastic-syndromes/all-content>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
- **Aplastic Anemia: Types** [<https://www.aamds.org/aplastic-anemia/types>] (Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation)

Severe Aplastic Anemia (SAA) [<https://www.nmdp.org/patients/understanding-transplant/diseases-treated-by-transplant/severe-aplastic-anemia>] (National Marrow Donor Program)

Genetics

- Fanconi anemia: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/fanconi-anemia>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials



- ClinicalTrials.gov: Anemia, Aplastic [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Anemia,+Aplastic%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: A decade of acquired aplastic anemia: insights from a Central South... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40687162>]
- Article: Post-traumatic growth experience with kinship hematopoietic stem cells transplantation in patients... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40638637>]
- Article: Efficacy and safety of immunosuppressive therapy versus cyclosporine combined with avatrombopag... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40617806>]
- Aplastic Anemia -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Anemia%2C+Aplastic%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>] 
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Aplastic Anemia [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/aplastic-anemia.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/aplastic-anemia.html>]
- Fanconi Anemia (for Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/fanconi-anemia.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/fanconi-anemia.html>]

Women

- Iron-Deficiency Anemia [<https://womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/iron-deficiency-anemia>]
(Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/iron-deficiency-anemia>]

Patient Handouts

- Aplastic anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000554.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000554.htm>]
- Fanconi anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000334.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000334.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Aplastic anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000554.htm>]

Fanconi anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000334.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/anemia.html>]

Bone Marrow Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/bonemarrowdiseases.html>]

Bone Marrow Transplantation [<https://medlineplus.gov/bonemarrowtransplantation.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Aplastic Anemia* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

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