



Anemia and Pregnancy

What is Anemia?

- Anemia means the red blood cells in your body are low. The red blood cells carry oxygen around your body and to your baby.
- Anemia can be common in your pregnancy because you need to make more red blood cells for your baby.
- Anemia can make you feel tired and weak, dizzy and light headed, and sometimes you may feel cold.

Your red blood cell level will be checked at your prenatal visits by taking a sample of your blood. The blood is checked early in your pregnancy and then again when you are 26-28 weeks pregnant.

If you are told you have anemia there will be several things you can do to help improve the red blood cells. You may be told to take an extra iron pill along with your prenatal vitamin.

- Iron pills are best taken with orange juice to help your body absorb the iron.
- It is best to take your iron pill separate from your prenatal vitamin, at least 2 hours apart.
- Never take iron with milk because the calcium will not allow your body to absorb the iron.
- Iron pills can cause your stomach to be upset and can also cause constipation. You will want to talk to your midwife/doctor if this happens.

The best way to prevent anemia is to eat foods, listed below that are high in iron:

- Red meat, Liver, Ham, Lamb, Pork, Tuna, Salmon, Perch, Halibut, Bass, Turkey or chicken giblets, Oysters, clams, scallops, corned beef (Cooked thoroughly)
- Egg Yolks
- Dark, leafy greens (Spinach, collards)
- Dried fruit (Prunes, raisins)
- Iron-enriched cereals and cream of wheat and brown rice
- Beans, lentils, chick peas and soybeans
- Artichokes
- Pumpkin, Squash seeds, Granola, Nuts (almonds, cashews, hazel nuts)