



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

An inadequate level of hemoglobin during pregnancy. Hemoglobin is the protein inside red blood cells that carries oxygen to body tissues.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Breathlessness.
- Tiredness, weakness or fainting.
- Paleness.

Less frequent:

- Palpitations or an abnormal awareness of the heart-beat.
- Inflamed, sore tongue.
- Nausea.
- Headache.
- Forgetfulness.
- Jaundice.
- Abdominal pain.

CAUSES

- Poor diet with inadequate iron.
- Folic-acid deficiency.
- Loss of blood from bleeding hemorrhoids or gastrointestinal bleeding.
- Excess cooking of food, which destroys available iron and other nutrients.
- Even if iron and folic-acid intake are sufficient, a pregnant woman may become anemic because pregnancy alters the digestive process. The unborn child consumes some of the iron or folic acid normally available to the mother's body.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Poor nutrition, especially multiple vitamin deficiencies.
- Smoking, which reduces absorption of important nutrients.
- Excess alcohol consumption, leading to poor nutrition.
- Medical history of any disorder that reduces absorption of nutrients.
- Use of anticonvulsant drugs.
- Previous use of oral contraceptives.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Eat foods rich in iron, such as liver, beef, whole-grain breads and cereals, eggs and dried fruit.
- Eat foods high in folic acid, such as wheat germ, beans, peanut butter, oatmeal, mushrooms, collards, broccoli, beef liver and asparagus.

- Eat foods high in vitamin C, such as citrus fruits and fresh, raw vegetables. Vitamin C makes iron absorption more efficient.

- Take prenatal vitamin and mineral supplements, if they are prescribed.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable with iron and folic-acid supplements by mouth or by injection.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Premature labor.
- Dangerous anemia from normal blood loss during labor, requiring blood transfusions.
- Increased susceptibility to infection after childbirth



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- If the tongue is red and sore, rinse with warm salt water 3 or 4 times a day. Use 1 teaspoon salt to 8 oz. warm water.

- Brush teeth with a soft toothbrush.

MEDICATIONS

Iron, folic acid and other supplements may be prescribed. For better absorption, take iron supplements 1 hour before eating or between meals. Iron will turn bowel movements black and often causes constipation.

ACTIVITY

No restrictions. Rest, if fatigued, until anemia disappears.

DIET

Eat well and take prescribed supplements. Increase fiber and fluid intake to prevent constipation.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You have symptoms of anemia during pregnancy.
- The following occur during treatment:
 - Diarrhea.
 - Nausea.
 - Abdominal pain.
 - Constipation.
 - Bleeding, however slight, from any source.