



## Pregnancy Anemia

### What is Anemia?

One of the ways that pregnancy changes your blood is by expanding itself, to supply more blood for your growing baby as well as to be prepared for the bleeding that happens after childbirth. As your blood volume expands, your red blood cells sometimes do not catch up and this is then called pregnancy induced anemia.

### How is it diagnosed?

Anemia is diagnosed with a blood test by evaluating your “hemoglobin” and “hematocrit” with a complete blood count (CBC). It is often called “iron deficiency,” because iron is what is needed for red blood cells to function. When there is insufficient iron, then there are low levels of hemoglobin and/or hematocrit.

### Why the concern?

Anemia can lead to many symptoms for a pregnant woman. The most common symptoms of anemia are:

- Extreme fatigue
- Pale skin
- Weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Frequent infections
- Headaches
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Cold hands and feet
- Brittle nails
- Fast heartbeat
- Unusual cravings for non-nutritive substances (dirt, ice, starch)
- Poor appetite
- Restless leg syndrome

In addition to these symptoms, anemia makes your body work very hard to get the right amount of nutrition and oxygen to your baby and makes the birthing person at increased risk of postpartum hemorrhage.

### How can I fix it?

First and foremost, food is the best way for your body to absorb iron. Synthetic vitamins work, but they are difficult for your body to absorb and will temporarily increase iron, but not necessarily help your red blood cells function the best. Some ideas for iron rich foods:

- Dark green, leafy vegetables
- Olives
- Beans
- Sesame seeds
- Meat
- Molasses
- Cereal (without cow’s milk)

Many minerals have a counterpart that helps them absorb more effectively. For iron, Vitamin C helps it work even more efficiently; you can increase your iron absorption by eating iron rich foods and supplements with something that has Vitamin C in it (oranges, lemons, citrus foods, red raspberry tea). Iron and calcium fight for absorption so eat iron foods and supplements away from calcium.

Another way to get a natural form of iron is to cook with cast iron pots. This puts iron directly into the food that you eat! If you don't have cast iron, or you'd like to add more cast iron, check out the lucky iron fish! <https://luckyironfish.com/>

## SUPPLEMENTS

**FERRASORB** provides 36 mg of elemental iron per capsule, plus the active forms of folate and vitamins B6 and B12, which are essential for blood building. Vitamin C optimizes iron absorption. We keep this supplement stocked in the office.



**FLORADIX** is made from plants and herbs in a concentrated liquid. You can get it at natural food stores and online. It is approximately \$20-\$25 for an 8oz bottle.

