

Anemia: After Pregnancy

What you can do to decrease risks for you and a future pregnancy



Things to do **EVERY DAY** for healthy women and babies:

Exercise – 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week

Vitamin – 400 micrograms (mcg) of Folic Acid per day

Educate yourself about medicines and chemicals that can cause birth defects

Reproductive life planning – set your personal goals for birth control and future children

Yearly doctor visits to discuss physical and mental wellness

Diet – Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains daily

Avoid tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

Your partner, friends, and family should be sources of support

Content from everywomancalifornia.org with permission from the Preconception Health Council of California.



Keeping your blood strong and healthy

- Iron deficiency anemia is caused by not having enough iron in your blood.
- Iron helps make red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body.
- Getting enough iron can increase your energy and can help prepare your body for future pregnancies.
- Many women need additional iron after having a baby to replace the iron used during the pregnancy or lost during childbirth.

How do you know if you have anemia?

- Symptoms of anemia may include paleness, feeling tired and weak, poor appetite, headaches, and frequent illness. Women can be anemic without having any symptoms.
- If you had anemia during the last months of your pregnancy or lost a lot of blood giving birth, you are at higher risk of having anemia.
- Blood tests are needed to determine if you have anemia and how you are responding to treatment.

Managing anemia after pregnancy

After pregnancy, you need about 18 milligrams (mg) of iron per day. You can take an iron supplement, and you can try to eat iron-rich foods to help build up the amount of iron in your blood, such as:

- Eggs and meats like beef, pork, chicken and turkey
- Fish, canned tuna, oysters
- Tofu, lentils and cooked beans: soy, pinto, kidney, and black
- Dark leafy greens: spinach, chard, collards, parsley, cilantro
- Prune juice, dried fruit, watermelon
- Fortified cereals with added iron
- Enriched tortillas, rice, pasta, and bread

Here are ways to get the most iron out of the foods you eat:

- Combine iron-rich foods with vitamin C-rich foods, such as tomatoes, broccoli, bell pepper, cabbage, oranges, cantaloupe, grapefruit, and mango.
- Prepare foods in a cast iron skillet so the foods absorb iron from the pan.
- Drink water with meals instead of milk, soda, coffee, tea, and wine, which can bind the iron in food, preventing your body from absorbing it.

Talk to your health care provider about how to best treat your anemia now and before a future pregnancy.

Remember your ABCs:

folic  cid  reastfeeding  ontraception

For more information, go to:

American Society of Hematology:

hematology.org/Patients/blood-disorders/anemia/5227.aspx

Every Woman California: everywomancalifornia.org

March of Dimes: marchofdimes.com/complications_anemia.html