

Iron Deficiency Anemia

At The Birth Center, we check for anemia by monitoring your hemoglobin at the first visit and again at 28 weeks. Iron is needed to make hemoglobin, which transports oxygen throughout the body, but most importantly to your baby.

Approximately 21% of pregnant women experience anemia.

Treating anemia may help prevent preterm birth, low birth weight, postpartum depression, lower your risks associated with blood loss during the birth, lower the risk for postpartum infections, and increase milk supply.

There are many ways to treat anemia. If it is a mild anemia, we may recommend that you add iron rich foods to your diet.

SIGNS OF ANEMIA

Tiredness
Feelings of weakness
Dizziness
Headache
Shortness of breath

Fortified Cereals



Fish, Clams & Oysters



Turkey



Eggs



Green leafy vegetables; steamed or wilted to preserve the nutrients



Beans & Lentils

Blackstrap Molasses

Cooking in cast iron also enriches foods with iron



Red Meat

There are also several types of iron supplementation that can be bought at pharmacies

- Floradix- this is a vegetable based liquid that is well absorbed. It can be found at health food stores around town. Take 2x the recommended daily dose.
- Ferrous Fumarate: 325mg twice a day. This form is most easily absorbed.
- Ferrous Gluconate: 325mg three times/day.
- Ferrous Sulfate: 325mg three times/day.

There are also slow release pills that may be tolerated better.

- Slow FE: 325mg three times a day
- Ferro-grad 500mg twice a day

The most common side effects are constipation, nausea and black stools. To reduce these symptoms you may decide to:

- Take a stool softener before the constipation starts
- Increase your intake of non-caffeinated fluids
- Increase your dietary fiber

Or you may decide to take only a half of a dose or a dose every few days.

Important Things to Know When Taking Iron

- It needs to be taken one hour before or after meals for good absorption.
- Do not take with coffee, milk, or calcium-fortified foods, as they inhibit absorption.
- Taking iron with Vitamin C helps with absorption
 - Start with 1 pill per day for one week, and increase to two pills for better tolerance.

It is more important that you take some iron than none at all.