

Anemia

A person with anemia has fewer red blood cells in his or her blood than the normal level. Red blood cells carry oxygen to all the cells in the body. When the number of red blood cells is lower than normal, less oxygen is carried in the blood.

Signs

A person with anemia may not notice any signs. As anemia gets worse, you may have:

- Fatigue – feel weak or tired
- Dizziness or feel faint
- Cold hands or feet
- Headaches
- Pale skin or nails that break easily
- Trouble thinking clearly or a hard time concentrating
- Shortness of breath or chest pain
- A fast or irregular heart beat
- Fewer menstrual periods or increased bleeding during menstrual periods

Talk to your doctor if you have any of these signs. **Call 911** if you have shortness of breath or chest pain.

Causes

The causes of anemia include:

- Problems with how iron is used by the body
- Not eating enough iron-rich foods

Anemia

Una persona con anemia tiene menos glóbulos rojos de lo normal en su cuerpo. Los glóbulos rojos llevan el oxígeno a todas las células del cuerpo. Cuando el número de glóbulos rojos es menor a lo normal, la sangre transporta menos oxígeno.

Signos

Una persona con anemia puede no notar ningún síntoma. Si la anemia empeora, pueden presentarse:

- fatiga, sentirse débil o cansado;
- mareos o sensación de que va a desvanecerse;
- manos o pies fríos;
- dolores de cabeza;
- piel pálida o uñas quebradizas;
- problemas para pensar con claridad o dificultad para concentrarse;
- dificultad para respirar o dolor en el pecho;
- ritmo cardíaco rápido o irregular;
- menos ciclos menstruales o mayor sangrado durante los períodos menstruales.

Hable con su médico si presenta cualquiera de estos signos. **Llame al 911** si le falta el aire o si siente dolor en el pecho.

Causas

Las causas de la anemia incluyen:

- problemas con cómo el cuerpo utiliza el hierro;
- no comer suficientes alimentos ricos en hierro;

- Bleeding or blood loss, such as from heavy menstrual periods
- Pregnancy
- A lack of folate or B-12 vitamins in the body
- Treatments for some diseases, such as cancer, that make it harder for the body to make new red blood cells
- Sickle-cell disease where the body destroys too many red blood cells
- Immune system problems where the body destroys or cannot make red blood cells
- Babies less than one year old who drink cow's or goat's milk
- Babies who are fed formula that does not have extra iron

Your Care

Your doctor will do tests to find the cause of your anemia and to plan your treatment. You may need to:

- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, breads, dairy products, meat and fish. Eat more iron-rich foods such as lean beef, pork or lamb, poultry, seafood, iron-fortified cereals and grains, green leafy vegetables such as spinach, nuts and beans. Your doctor may want you to meet with a dietitian to plan healthy meals.
- Take vitamin or iron supplements.
- Get a blood transfusion to treat blood loss. Blood is given through an intravenous (IV) line into a blood vessel.
- Have other treatments such as medicines or surgery to treat the cause of your anemia.

- sangrado o pérdida de sangre, como ser por períodos menstruales con sangrado muy abundante;
- embarazo;
- falta de ácido fólico o de vitamina B-12 en el cuerpo;
- tratamientos de algunas enfermedades como cáncer, que hacen que sea más difícil para el cuerpo generar nuevos glóbulos rojos;
- anemia de células falciformes, en que el cuerpo destruye demasiados glóbulos rojos;
- problemas con el sistema inmunitario por los que el cuerpo destruye o no puede generar suficientes glóbulos rojos;
- bebés de menos de un año que beben leche de vaca o de cabra;
- bebés que son alimentados con fórmula que no contiene hierro adicional.

Cuidados

Su médico le hará exámenes para encontrar la causa de su anemia, y para planificar su tratamiento. Es posible que deba:

- Mantener una dieta sana que incluya frutas, verduras, panes, productos lácteos, carne y pescado. Comer más alimentos ricos en hierro, como la carne magra, cerdo o cordero, pollo, mariscos, cereales y granos fortificados con hierro, verduras de hoja verde como espinaca, nueces y guisantes. Su médico puede recomendarle que consulte a un nutricionista para planificar comidas saludables.
- Tomar vitaminas o suplementos de hierro.
- Obtener una transfusión de sangre para tratar la pérdida de sangre. La sangre es administrada por vía intravenosa (IV) a un vaso sanguíneo.
- Recibir otros tratamientos, como ser medicamentos o cirugía para tratar la causa de su anemia.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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Hable con su médico o enfermera si tiene alguna pregunta o duda.

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Anemia. Spanish.