



Resolving Anemia in Pregnancy

Iron deficiency anemia is a condition in which the red blood cells are not able to carry adequate oxygen to the body's tissues. Your body uses iron to make hemoglobin, a protein in the red blood cells that carries oxygen to your tissues. During pregnancy, the volume of blood in your body increases, and so does the amount of iron you need. Your body uses iron to make more blood to supply oxygen to your baby. If you don't have enough iron stores or get enough iron during pregnancy, you could develop iron deficiency anemia.

Severe iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy increases the risk of preterm birth. Iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy is also associated with having a low birth weight baby and postpartum depression.

Your iron supplement is best taken on an empty stomach with orange juice or a Vitamin C supplement (250mg - 500mg) to enhance absorption. Take it at a separate time of day from your prenatal vitamin and other calcium sources, as calcium can block iron absorption. Iron supplements can cause constipation, but the following suggestions tend to be easier on the digestive tract. If you are experiencing any digestive issues or constipation, talk to the midwives about alternatives.

Supplement options

- Hema-Plex: contains 85 mg of chelated iron (a more readily absorbed form), plus vitamins and minerals to boost red blood cell health
- Chelated iron: typically available in 30mg tablets - take 1-3x day depending on severity of anemia
- Slow Fe: contains 45 mg of ferrous sulfate extended release, available at most pharmacies
- Ferrous Gluconate: contains 38 mg of iron, less than previously mentioned supplements but may be gentler on the stomach, available at most pharmacies

Additional supplementation (typically found at a natural foods store):

- 1 dropperful of yellow dock and dandelion tinctures twice a day
- 1-4 cups nettle tea/infusion per day
 - You can find dried nettles in bulk: use 1/2 inch of herbs in the bottom of a quart jar, pour boiling water over and cap tightly, steep 4-8 hours, strain, drink warm or cold

Iron Rich Foods	Serving Size	Mg of Iron
Total™ Raisin Bran Cereal	3/4 cup	18 mg
Cream of Wheat®, instant	¾ cup, cooked	9 mg
Clams	¼ cup	8 mg
Grits	½ cup	7 mg
Beef liver (limit to 1x week)	3.5 oz.	7 mg
Tofu	½ cup, raw	7 mg
Lentils	½ cup, cooked	7 mg
Oysters	6 medium	5 mg
Black strap molasses	1 Tbsp	4 mg
Hershey's Special Dark Chocolate	1 oz.	3 mg
Spinach	5 oz., cooked or raw	3 mg
Turkey or ground beef	3.5 oz., cooked	2 mg