

# ANEMIA

Anemia is a condition in which the amount of red cells in the blood is decreased. In teenagers, it is most often caused by iron deficiency. Iron deficiency can be caused in several ways:

- Not enough iron in the diet
- Loss of iron through
  - Heavy menstrual bleeding
  - Heavy nosebleeds
  - Bleeding from stomach or intestines

## Symptoms of Anemia

- Pale skin color
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Low blood pressure with positional changes
- Sore tongue
- Brittle nails
- Unusual food cravings (pica)
- Decreased appetite
- Frontal headache

## Treatment

After a diagnosis of iron-deficiency anemia, you will most likely be given an iron-containing medicine such as ferrous sulfate. This should be taken with food to prevent stomach upset.

It is very important to be tested again after 6 weeks to determine whether you are still anemic. Try also to increase the amount of iron in your diet; you may also take a multivitamin that contains iron.

## Foods That Contain Iron

- Most cereals are iron-fortified
- Meats (especially red meats; liver is the highest source)
- Beans, especially kidney beans, lentils, or black beans
- Green, leafy vegetables (such as spinach)
- Baked potatoes, peanut butter, raisins, dried apricots
- Fish, poultry, egg yolk

**Keep iron medicine out of reach of small children; iron poisoning can be very serious!**