

## Anemia

Normal Hemoglobin values for women are 12-15 g./100ml. However during pregnancy hemoglobin levels are normally decreased (because of increased blood volumes in pregnancy.) During the first trimester the values should be in the normal range. From 28 weeks to term the reading is usually 2 g. less than it was at 8 weeks. If the reading is less than 12.5 g. at 8 weeks, or if it is less than 11 g. at 28 weeks, vitamin, herbal and nutritional therapy should be started.

Iron is needed for healthy hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying substance of the red blood cells. Nutritional anemia can cause extreme fatigue, susceptibility to illness, decreased oxygen supply to the baby, and the baby's growth could be affected. Iron is more easily absorbed by the body if you eat it with foods that are high in Vitamin C. Milk hinders the absorption of iron so it should be avoided for 2 hours after eating iron rich foods.

Natural sources of iron will be more easily assimilated. Cooking in cast iron pans will add trace amounts of iron into the food. Exercise increases oxygen demand and will stimulate the body's use of nutritive elements that raise the hemoglobin. Exercise that is not stressful to the body such as walking would be a good choice.

Sources of iron include:

Liver 3 oz. 7-12 mg.

Beef 3 oz. 2-3 mg.

Poultry 3 oz. 2 mg.

Wheat germ 1/2 cup 5 mg.

Soybeans 1 cup 5 mg.

dried apricots 1 cup 4 mg.

dried prunes 4 oz. 3.8 mg.

prune juice 1 cup 10 mg.

Some other foods that are high in iron are: Black cherries, Alfalfa, Dark grapes, Raisins, Dark leafy greens, Peas, Turnip greens, Parsley, Dandelion greens, Egg yolks, Blackstrap molasses.

Foods that contain oxalic acid interfere with iron absorption. These include: almonds, asparagus, cashews, chocolate, rhubarb, soda, spinach, swiss chard, and most nuts. Additives in beer, candy bars, dairy products, and soft drinks interfere with iron absorption as do tannins in tea, polyphenols in coffee, and cadmium from smoking.

Herbs that are high in iron are also beneficial. They should be prepared in water (as teas). They will also help with general nutrition and enrich the blood. Red Raspberry leaf, Comfrey, Alfalfa, Dandelion, and Nettle leaf are good herbs to increase the hemoglobin. Spirolina, Kelp, and liquid chlorophyll are very good sources and will help raise hemoglobin levels.

Prescription iron is hard on the body and is usually not absorbed very well. Iron shots stress the liver and have been associated with severe infections. Iron supplementation will probably not be needed if other therapies are used but if necessary there are supplements available at health food stores that are more easily assimilated.