

Iron Deficiency Anemia

Iron is an essential trace mineral needed for hemoglobin formation. Iron deficiency is a condition resulting from insufficient iron in the body. It is the most common nutritional deficiency and the leading cause of anemia.

Causes

- Lack of iron-rich foods in the diet
- Lack of vitamin C in the diet, which helps in the absorption of iron by the body
- Chronic blood loss due to parasitism or menstruation
- Increased demand of the body during pregnancy and lactation
- Low absorption of iron from foods
- High requirement of infants, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women

Signs

- Weakness
- Insomnia
- Easily becomes tired
- Lack of appetite
- Lack of concentration
- Pallor

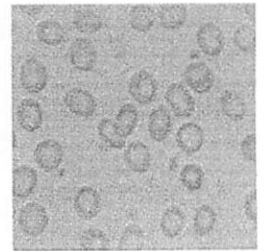
Identified Target Groups for Iron Supplementation

- **Pregnant and lactating women** must take iron supplements for at least 6 months during pregnancy and continue into postpartum period when there is a risk for anemia.
- **Infants (6-11 months of age)** need a relatively high iron intake because they are growing very rapidly. Beyond 6 months, iron content of breastmilk and complementary

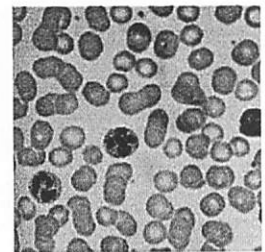
foods is not enough.

Low-birth weight infants should be given iron supplements at 2 months of age.

- **Other population groups, such as anemic and underweight children, adolescents (especially when pregnancy may occur), women of reproductive age, and older persons**



anemia



normal blood

Treatment/Prevention

- Eat foods rich in iron, such as meat, dark green leafy vegetables (i.e., malunggay, kamote tops, gabi leaves, petchay, saluyot, alugbati, kangkong), liver, and internal organs.
- Take iron supplements with folic acid daily as prescribed, especially during pregnancy.
- Eliminate intestinal parasites through deworming.
- Exclusively breastfeed infants up to 6 months and continue breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond.
- Increase vitamin C intake.

References

- Department of Health Philippines. Administrative Order No. 119 s. 2003. "Updated Guidelines on Micronutrient Supplementation (Vitamin A, Iron, and Iodine)."
- DOH Philippines. (2005). Health Advisory on Iodine Deficiency Disorder.
- World Health Organization. (2011). Micronutrient Deficiencies. Retrieved from www.who.int/nutrition/topics/idd/en/