

# Anaemia in Pregnancy

## What is it?

Anaemia means you don't have enough red blood cells in your blood. It's often caused by low levels of iron. During pregnancy, your body can produce several litres of extra blood to support your growing baby. If you don't have enough iron, your body may not have enough red blood cells needed to produce this extra blood.

Anaemia in pregnancy is common and treatable. The condition is diagnosed with blood tests which are usually taken at the beginning of pregnancy and again at 28 weeks. It's important to treat anaemia in pregnancy so it doesn't get more serious.

## What will my GP do?

Your GP will:

- Talk to you about correcting your anaemia
- Check there was not a pre-existing cause of the anaemia
- Give you advice about how to take iron
- Talk to you about side effects of iron
- Discuss the health risks of low iron
- Give you resources to help you learn more about anaemia
- Arrange referrals if needed

Your GP may make a follow-up appointment to discuss:

- Medications you may need to change
- Treatment for any pre-existing health conditions



## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Will this affect my baby's growth?
- Will my condition get worse?
- What are the side effects of taking iron?
- How do I know if I am getting better?

## What supports are available?

Anaemia in pregnancy is usually easy to treat. If you need to see a specialist, the antenatal doctor clinics are available.

- Bankstown Hospital Antenatal Clinic: phone 9722 8333
- Bowral and District Hospital Antenatal Clinic: phone 4861 0224
- Campbelltown and Camden Hospital Antenatal Clinic: phone 4634 4963
- Fairfield Hospital Antenatal Clinic: phone 9616 8506

Liverpool Hospital Antenatal Clinic: phone 8738 4197

## What can I do?

- **Keep taking your medication** – follow your GP's advice
- **Eat a healthy diet** – with plenty of iron-rich foods – such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs and fortified grains
- **Take your pregnancy vitamins** – including folate
- **Exercise regularly** – like walking and swimming
- **Get enough rest** – aim for eight hours of sleep

## Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to read more about anaemia in pregnancy, these sites can help:

- **Gastroenterological Society of Australia** – information about iron deficiency: [gesa.org.au](http://gesa.org.au)
- **Queensland Government** – iron for pregnant women: [health.qld.gov.au](http://health.qld.gov.au)