

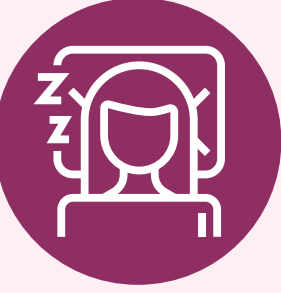
Is Your Teen Anemic?

Learn about the symptoms of iron deficiency anemia (IDA)

What is iron deficiency anemia?

IDA happens when the body is missing the iron needed to produce healthy red blood cells that carry oxygen to organs and tissues.

Symptoms in teens may include:



Weakness
Extreme tiredness



Headache
Dizziness or lightheadedness



Cold hands and feet
Pale skin
Brittle nails



Fast heartbeat
Chest pain
Shortness of breath



Poor appetite
Pica (craving non-food items such as ice or dirt)

The signs and symptoms of IDA can overlap with those of other conditions, and some people with IDA may not experience any symptoms at all.

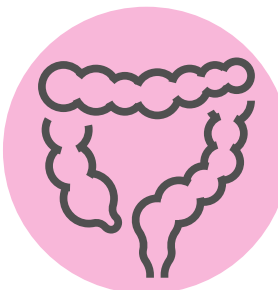
What causes iron deficiency anemia in teens?



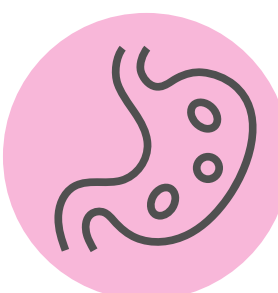
Blood loss from menstruation, especially **heavy periods (heavy uterine bleeding)**



Poor diet that lacks iron-rich foods



Gastrointestinal (GI) problems like **Crohn's disease** or **ulcerative colitis**, which can lower the body's ability to absorb iron and/or cause bleeding in the GI tract



Stomach ulcers that cause blood loss



Growth spurts because the body needs more iron to keep up with red blood cell production



Certain types of cancer

Potential complications of iron deficiency anemia in teens

Teens with anemia may be too tired to do anything physical or might struggle to stay focused at school. If left untreated, anemia **may also lead to:**



Delays in learning, growth and development



Heart problems



Increased risk of infection



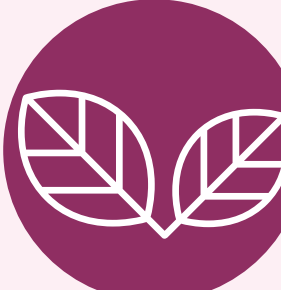
Depression

Getting enough iron

To help your teen get enough iron, focus on feeding them foods that are rich in iron, such as:



Cereal, bread, pasta and rice enriched with added nutrients



Leafy green vegetables spinach, broccoli, kale and collard greens



Legumes lima beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas



Shellfish clams, mussels and oysters, and oily fish such as sardines and anchovies



Poultry chicken and turkey (especially dark meat)



Meats beef, pork, liver and other organ meats

Treatment for anemia

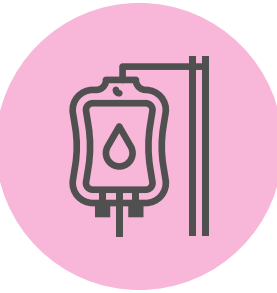
If your teen has anemia from low iron, there are several ways it can be treated.



Iron supplements



Treatments to reduce heavy menstrual bleeding



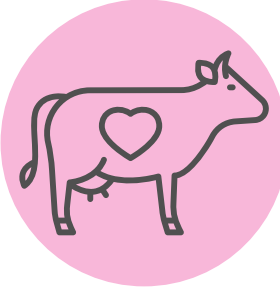
Intravenous (IV) iron



Treatments for underlying diseases that may be contributing to the anemia



Blood transfusions



Changing to an iron-rich diet

Worried your teen may be anemic?

Talk to your teen's healthcare provider. Other tests and evaluations may also be needed to find out why they have low iron.