Iron Deficiency in Adults

Iron deficiency is common in adults. It occurs when the body does not get enough iron to make the hemoglobin it needs to carry oxygen. Iron deficiency can lead to fatigue, weakness, and shortness of breath.

Symptoms of Iron Deficiency:
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Paresthesias (numbness or tingling)
- Paleness
- Brittle nails

Iron Deficiency and Pregnancy:
During pregnancy, women need more iron to make baby hemoglobin. Iron deficiency during pregnancy can lead to low birth weight, preterm birth, and other complications.

Causes of Iron Deficiency:
- Blood loss (e.g., menstrual, gastrointestinal, dermatological)
- Poor dietary intake (e.g., vegetarian, vegan)
- Increased iron requirements (e.g., pregnancy, lactation)
- Inflammation

How Are My Iron Levels Measured?
Iron levels can be measured using blood tests. The most common tests include:
- Hemoglobin
- Serum iron
- Total iron binding capacity (TIBC)
- Serum ferritin
- Transferrin saturation (TSAT)

What Happens If My Iron Levels Are Low?
Iron deficiency can lead to a variety of health problems. It can also increase the risk of other conditions, such as heart disease and stroke.

How to Treat Iron Deficiency:
The main treatment for iron deficiency is to increase iron intake through diet. Iron-rich foods include red meats, fortified cereals, beans, and leafy greens. In severe cases, iron supplements may be necessary.

Prevention of Iron Deficiency:
To prevent iron deficiency, it is important to eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of iron-rich foods. Regular physical activity and a healthy lifestyle can also help prevent iron deficiency.

This website is intended to provide educational information to an international audience, at the exclusion of US residents. All information contained herein is intended for professional use. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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