

## Anemia

When your red blood cell count is low, you have anemia. Red blood cells are made in the bone marrow. They carry oxygen throughout the body. When there are fewer red blood cells, the body tissues may not get enough oxygen. Anemia can be measured by a blood test.

### Normal Values

- **Men**
  - Hematocrit (Hct): 40-52%
  - Hemoglobin (Hgb): 13.6-17.2
- **Women**
  - Hematocrit (Hct): 34-46%
  - Hemoglobin (Hgb): 11.6-15.6

### Causes

Common causes include:

- Low iron levels
- Low levels of folate or vitamin B12
- Cancer
- Medicines, such as chemotherapy
- Radiation
- Blood loss
- Chronic kidney disease
- Sickle cell disease
- Thalassemia

### Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble breathing when walking, climbing stairs or talking
- Pale skin
- Ringing in the ears
- Light-headedness
- Pounding or fast heart rate
- Chest pain
- Blood in your stool
- Dark brown or red vomit

### Treatment

Treatment depends on the cause of your anemia. Your provider may have you take iron supplements, vitamins, hormones or growth factors. Your provider will also decide if you need a blood transfusion.

### How to Manage Your Anemia

- Plan frequent, short rest periods
- Change positions slowly:
  - Lying to sitting
  - Sitting to standing
- Stand awhile before walking
- Dress warmly
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink lots of fluids (8-10 8oz glasses) unless your provider gives you other instructions
- Talk with your providers and nurses about an exercise plan to deal with fatigue
- Ask for Health Fact #4384, Cancer-Related Fatigue

### When to Call

Call if you have any of the listed symptoms.

### Who to Call

Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours: \_\_\_\_\_