

Surgery and Anemia: What you need to know

Why is it important to improve anemia before surgery?

Improving anemia before surgery is very important for your recovery and outcomes after surgery. Research has shown that people who do not have anemia before surgery show...



higher survival rates after surgery.



reduced likelihood of needing a blood transfusion.



reduced risk of infection and other serious complications.



increased quality of life after surgery.



and reduced time needed in the hospital after surgery.

You should be an active partner in your treatment plan.

Be sure to talk with your provider about questions and expectations you have for treatment, preparing for surgery, the surgery itself, and recovery.

What else should I know about anemia?

- Anemia is a condition that happens when your body does not have enough red blood cells. It is important to address anemia before surgery to prevent complications.
- Treating anemia effectively requires knowing its cause. **Talk to your provider as soon as possible before surgery if you have or suspect you may have anemia.**

What Causes Anemia?

Anemia has many causes. These include:

- Genetic conditions
- Not getting enough iron or vitamins (B12 and folate) through the foods you eat
- Blood loss due to things such as heavy menstrual periods, ulcers, and gastrointestinal issues (note: not all gastrointestinal bleeding is obvious)

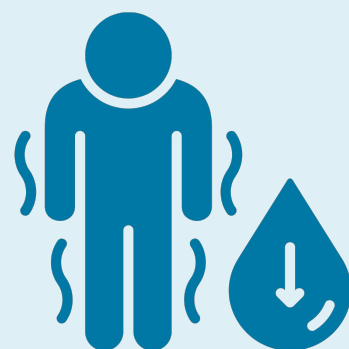
Anemia is More Common Among:

- Older adults
- Pregnant individuals
- People who menstruate
- People with a vegan or vegetarian diet
- People with autoimmune disorders
- People with intestinal and digestive issues
- People with chronic kidney disease

Symptoms of anemia may include:

- Weakness and tiredness
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Abnormal or fast heartbeat
- Headaches

Note: Some people who have anemia have no symptoms at all



What can I do to improve anemia before surgery?



If Your Anemia Is Caused By Low Iron:

- If you have an upcoming surgery, oral iron treatment and nutritional changes alone will likely not address anemia fast enough. Talk to your surgical team about other solutions, such as IV iron.
- Talk to a provider about starting oral iron tablets or making adjustments to your diet to address your low iron in the long-term.

If Your Anemia Is Caused By Something Else:

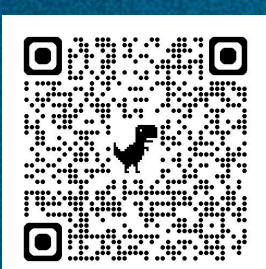
- Talk to your surgical team about how you can determine and treat the cause of your anemia.
- You should also talk with a provider about how to manage the cause for your anemia in the long-term.

Many people struggle to access healthy and fresh foods, know where and how to get medical care, and balance other life demands with treating conditions such as anemia. There are resources that can help. If needed, you may seek extra support here:
[Health plan may insert link to patient resource navigator]

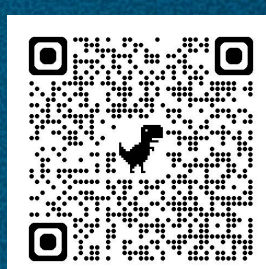
More information
about anemia



More advice
for preparing
for surgery



Food sources
of iron



More information
about gastrointestinal
bleeding

