

Causes, Signs and Symptoms of Anemia

CAUSES OF ANEMIA

- Nutritional deficiency: from iron, zinc, B12, or folate
- Increased demand for iron: during pregnancy or childhood growth spurt
- Blood loss: during menstruation, childbirth, surgery, injury, or GI bleeding
- Inflammatory bowel conditions
- Diseases: such as infections, autoimmune disease, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, or other bleeding disorders
- Hormone imbalance
 - Ex: hypothyroidism
- Changes in bone marrow function
 - Ex: leukemia or aplastic anemia
- Chronic hemolysis, or breakdown of red blood cells
- Poisoning: from lead and other heavy metals
- Medications
 - Ex: aspirin or anticonvulsants
- Genetics
 - Ex: inherited blood-forming diseases

CAUSES BY CATEGORY

Iron deficiency

- Diet
- Increased demand (growth, pregnancy)
- Blood loss (menstruation, parasites, etc.)

Malabsorption

- H. pylori
- Crohn's
- Hypochlorhydria

Vitamin and mineral deficiencies

- B6 (alcohol)
- Vitamin A, B, C, E, K, zinc, copper
- B12

Premature hemolysis

- Hemolytic anemias
- Enzyme deficiencies
- Autoimmune disease

Dysfunctional erythropoiesis

- Kidney failure
- Bone marrow failure
- Thalassemia
- Cancer
- Sideroblastic anemia

Bleeding disorders

- Von Willebrand's
- PNH
- Hemophilia

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ANEMIA

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Twitching/flinching
- Restless legs syndrome (RLS)
- Pale skin, tongue, fingernails, palms
- Loss of tongue papillae
- Hyposalivation
- Thrush
- Brittle or spoon nails
- Pica (desire to eat non-food items)
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Tachycardia
- Chest pain
- Splenomegaly