



Why is iron important?

- Hemoglobin in the red blood cells carries oxygen in the body
- To produce hemoglobin, we need iron
- In pregnancy more iron is needed for the pregnant woman/individual and the baby
- Not enough iron can result in fewer red blood cells than needed. This is called **iron deficiency anemia (IDA)**
- Low iron with no anemia is **non-anemic iron deficiency (NAID)**

Common symptoms of Iron Deficiency & Iron Deficiency Anemia:

- Fatigue
- Hair and nail changes
- Restless legs
- Poor exercise tolerance
- The urge to eat inedible things like ice (Pica)
- Low mood
- Brain fog and problems with memory, attention and thought processes
- Shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort
- Dizziness when you go from lying or sitting to standing

Risks for Pregnancy and Infant Health:

Increased chance of:

- Cesarean birth
- Postpartum hemorrhage
- Blood transfusion
- Premature birth (before 37 weeks)
- Low birth weight baby
- Neurodevelopmental complications, including autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder



Preventing Iron Deficiency in Pregnancy:

- A blood test in early pregnancy is the most common way to screen for iron deficiency
- If you have any of the symptoms above, talk to your health care provider
- Almost everyone needs to take iron in pregnancy to provide needed nutritional support
- Discuss with your health care provider what might be the best iron supplement for you

Iron supplements can interact with other medications. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to make sure there are no interactions with your medications.

For more information visit <https://firstexposure.ca/non-anemic-iron-deficiency-and-iron-deficiency-anemia-in-pregnancy/> or scan the QR code.



This information does not replace the medical care and advice from your healthcare provider. Please contact your healthcare provider for any questions you may have.

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