

## MY HEMOGLOBIN IS LOW. DOES THIS MEAN I'M ANEMIC?

Hemoglobin is found in your red blood cells (RBC) and is what gives your blood its red color. Its main function is to carry oxygen throughout the body and carry away carbon dioxide. When your hemoglobin level does not meet our criteria, you may be temporarily deferred. Since many factors can play a part in low hemoglobin, and the state is often temporary, it doesn't necessarily mean you are anemic.

It is always a good idea to eat a good meal within four hours before donating, and drink plenty of water before and after your donation. It is advisable to avoid caffeinated drinks right before you donate.

**A doctor must review a patient's symptoms and examine a patient before diagnosing him or her with anemia. A complete blood count is needed to confirm anemia and measure its severity. Specific blood tests may be necessary to evaluate the type of anemia.**

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## Blood Donor Hemoglobin Care Kit

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Here are some things you should know in order to increase or maintain a sufficient hemoglobin level to donate blood.

## FACTS

1. If you have been deferred as a blood donor because of low hemoglobin level, it does not mean you are anemic or cannot donate in the future. In fact, in most cases, a simple change in your diet is all that is needed to increase your hemoglobin level.
2. Iron, when combined with certain proteins, becomes hemoglobin in red blood cells.
3. Iron is a vital mineral used to generate energy.
4. Every human cell contains iron.
5. 80 percent of the iron found in the body is contained in hemoglobin.
6. Women are more prone to having low iron since they experience blood loss during menstruation, and they often eat less than men.
7. Women need more iron than men particularly during childbearing years.
8. People who donate blood should pay special attention to their diets in order to maintain iron levels.
9. It is not only necessary to eat food rich in iron, it is also necessary to eat in a way which maximizes iron absorption.
10. Iron supplements are not as well absorbed as iron from food, thus higher doses are usually necessary.

## WAYS TO INCREASE HEMOGLOBIN (hgb)

Eat several servings of iron rich foods daily in meals and snacks.

Eat foods rich in vitamin C at the same time you eat foods rich in iron. Vitamin C helps iron absorption.

Prepare food by cooking slowly in iron cookware. Contact with iron increases iron in food.

Eat enriched or fortified food such as breads and cereals.

Avoid consuming tea, coffee, soy, fiber and nuts during and after meals or snacks with iron-rich foods since these foods reduce iron absorption.

### IRON-RICH FOODS

Meats, fish and poultry provide about a third of the iron in the average diet.

Red meat, brown legume's (beans and peas), dark green leafy vegetables and dried fruit make the greatest contribution of iron to the diet.

Whole grain or enriched breads and cereal provide about a third of the iron in the average diet.

*Sources: Whitney et al. Understanding Normal & Clinical Nutrition; Standfield's Nutrition and Diet Therapy; and "What Does a Low Hemoglobin Level Mean?" from Florida Georgia Blood Alliance*

## POSSIBLE FOOD CHOICES

Oysters	Liverwurst
Beef	Fish
Liver	Clams
Pork	Turkey
Chicken	Sardines
Shrimp	
Braunschweiger sausage	
Tofu	Parsley, chopped fresh
Spinach	Sauerkraut, canned
Turnip greens	Broccoli
Collards	
Raisins	Dates
Apricots, dried	Peaches, dried
Prune juice	
Lima beans	Black eyed peas
Navy beans	Green peas
Soybeans	Green beans
Kidney beans	
Iron-fortified bread & cereals	Whole grains

## VITAMIN C SOURCES FOR IRON ABSORPTION

Grapefruit	Green pepper
Oranges	Cabbage
Greens	Broccoli
Cantaloupe	Cauliflower
Strawberries	Vitamin C fortified juices
Watermelon	
Tomatoes	