



## Children's Health

# Anemia

### WHAT IT IS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Anemia is found most often in infants and young children. Iron-deficiency anemia, the most common type of anemia, occurs when the number of red blood cells in the body are low or when the amount of hemoglobin (oxygen-carrying protein) in the red blood cells is inadequate. This can occur due to a poor diet or blood loss. Other causes of anemia are some illnesses or inherited diseases.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT ANEMIA

- See your child's doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment.
- Feed your child a nutritious, well-balanced diet that includes iron-rich foods, such as liver, red meat, fish, poultry, eggs, legumes, green vegetables, potatoes, rice, dried apricots, dried peaches, whole grains, raisins, beans, nuts and peanut butter. Also look for iron-enriched foods.
- Give your child Vitamin C by having him/her drink orange juice and eat oranges—this vitamin increases the body's ability to use iron.

#### WHY IRON IS SO IMPORTANT

When iron is absorbed, it attaches itself to red blood cells. In the bloodstream, iron travels to the lungs where it picks up oxygen that is then carried to all the body's tissues. If insufficient iron is present, less oxygen is available to all tissues, especially the brain.



#### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

*weakness*

*headache*

*poor physical growth*

*fussiness or hyperactivity*

*poor appetite*

*decreased ability to concentrate*

*pale skin, gums, fingernail beds and eyelids*