

## Anaemia

Symptoms: tiredness, breathlessness; pallor, particularly inside the eyelids, mouth and lips, fingernails; dizziness, fainting and buzzing in the ears.

Eat more liver, black pudding, kidneys, eggs, bread, cereals, pulses, leafy greens, watercress, dried apricots, dates and other dried fruits, molasses, red meat for iron; liver, leafy greens, wheat germ, peanuts, almonds, tomato puree, yeast extract, brewers' yeast for folic acid; citrus and other fruits for vitamin C.

Eat less tea, coffee, cola, chocolate, bran and bran cereals.

When anaemia develops very slowly, as it often does, the first signs may be loss of appetite, headache, constipation, irritability and poor concentration. A common early sign of anaemia is the 'restless legs syndrome'. Continual loss of blood, and, with it, iron, through heavy or prolonged menstrual periods, piles, gastric ulcers, ulcerative colitis or even severe and untreated gum disease like gingivitis, may be the cause. Increased demand for iron during pregnancy and times of sudden growth in childhood and adolescence, may also lead to iron-deficiency anaemia.

Lack of other essential nutrients like vitamin B12, folic acid and vitamin C, can play an important part in this condition, so it is vital to make sure you have plenty of them in your diet.

Many experts claim that there are no people with nutritional deficiencies, that nobody needs to take extra vitamins or minerals, and that we all live on a perfectly adequate diet. In reality, this just isn't true, and millions survive on diets which provide the barest minimum of the essential nutrients but large excesses of empty calories.

Take your shopping basket on a spree and fill it with all the good things to keep your blood healthy.

Iron is the first requirement, and you will find it in liver, black pudding, kidneys, eggs, bread, cereals, pulses, leafy greens, watercress, dried apricots, dates and other dried fruits, molasses and red meat.

Folic acid is the next essential. Get it from liver, leafy greens, wheat germ, peanuts, almonds, tomato puree, yeast extract and brewers' yeast. A lot of folic acid is lost into the water when you cook green vegetables, so add the cooking water to soups, casseroles, stocks and gravy, and make sure that you eat plenty of green salads.

Vitamin B12 occurs in all foods of animal origin, and especially in offal. Vegetarians and vegans need to eat substantial quantities of yeast extract and breakfast cereals – but not rich in bran - which are fortified with vitamin B12.

Vitamin C has an important role, as it helps the body to absorb iron. So do make sure that you increase your vitamin C intake when eating meals rich in iron – a salad with an omelette, an orange after your egg sandwich, green peppers with your grilled liver.

Stinging nettles and dandelion leaves are rich in iron, and you can make tea from both of them – a teaspoon of chopped leaves to a cup of boiling water. Nettles also make great soup, and dandelion leaves give an unusual bite to your salad – do pick them where the dogs can't go! Elderberries, parsley, watercress, chives, lovage and fennel are all prime sources of the essential blood nutrients, and should be added to salads and fruit dishes.

*There are some things which reduce the amount of iron which your body can absorb. Tannin and caffeine are the worst, and for this reason do not drink tea, coffee, chocolate or cola drinks at meals including iron rich dishes.*

*Bran is another substance which should be kept well away from iron sources – don't sprinkle it on your breakfast cereal before you enjoy the boiled egg and soldiers!*

Spatone iron supplement is natural water with a high content of iron sulphate, so your body easily and gently absorbs it – taking as much iron as it needs and quickly rejecting the rest without side effects. .go to [www.spatone.com](http://www.spatone.com)

It may surprise you that a good source of iron is a vegetable Balti curry - as long as it's been cooked in a traditional cast iron balti pot. Why not go to your nearest Asian food shop and buy some of these dishes so that you can cook at home with one of the readymade balti vegetable curries available in most big supermarkets.

.