



Why does WIC test my blood?

WIC is measuring hemoglobin, a protein in the blood that contains iron. It carries oxygen through the body, gives you energy, and helps you fight infections.

Low hemoglobin may mean you have low iron. Low iron may put you at risk for anemia. Pregnant women with anemia may have premature or small babies. Children with anemia may have growth problems or struggle in school.

What can cause low hemoglobin?

- Loss of blood through menstrual bleeding
- Infants born to mothers with low hemoglobin
- Rapid growth, especially in infants and young children and during pregnancy



Building Healthy Blood



Signs that iron may be low

- Feeling tired or weak
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Getting sick more often
- Pale skin



What can I do if my hemoglobin is low?

1. Eat more high-iron foods.
2. Absorb more iron from foods.
3. Talk to your doctor about taking an iron supplement.



Try to eat an iron rich food at each meal

Best sources of iron

- Beef
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Lamb
- Pork
- Fish



Iron from meats is used better in the body than iron from plant foods

Good sources of iron

- WIC cereals
- Iron fortified foods like bread and pastas
- Beans, peas, lentils
- Spinach
- Tofu



Vitamin C



Vitamin C helps your body use the iron that you eat. Eat iron-rich foods with foods high in Vitamin C to help your body absorb iron better.

Foods high in Vitamin C

- Oranges, grapefruit, tangerines
- Berries
- Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage
- Tomatoes, potatoes
- Leafy greens
- Kiwi, mango, papaya, melon
- Bell peppers

Calcium

Too much calcium can prevent the body from absorbing iron.



- Don't go overboard with dairy foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Children only need 16 ounces (2 cups) of dairy a day.
- Women only need 24 ounces (3 cups) of dairy a day.
- Take multivitamins with juice or water instead of milk.