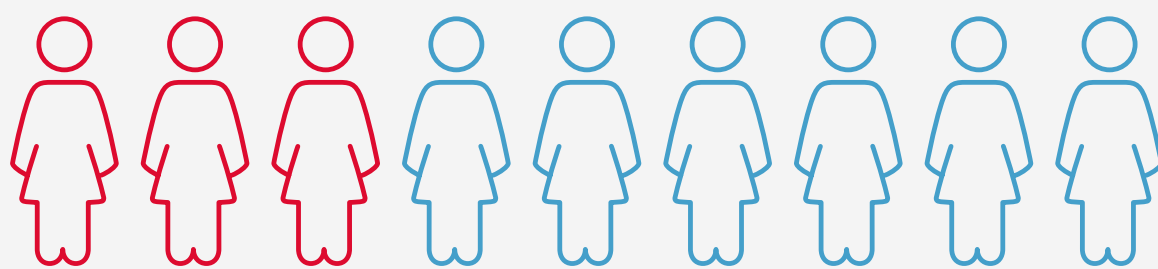


Iron is essential in keeping you healthy every day.¹ But when you are pregnant, the amount of iron you have already stored and available in your body (known as iron stores) becomes particularly important for you and your baby.²

In this factsheet, you will learn more about the risks associated with not meeting your iron requirements.

WHY PREGNANT WOMEN ARE AT RISK OF IRON DEFICIENCY

Knowing about your risk of iron deficiency in pregnancy is critical as low iron levels can impact your health and your baby's development.³⁻⁶ Even prior to pregnancy, women can be more at risk of iron deficiency than men because of the blood they lose during periods.⁷



Iron deficiency without anaemia affects **up to 33%** of menstruating women in Europe⁸

When you become pregnant, your estimated daily iron needs increase almost 8-fold from the first to the third trimester of pregnancy.⁹ As the largest amount of iron that a healthy individual can absorb through diet is ~1-2 mg,⁶ it can be impossible to absorb all the iron required, regardless of diet.^{9,10}

... DID YOU KNOW? ...

UP TO 4 IN 10

WOMEN BEGIN THEIR PREGNANCY WITH LOW OR DEPLETED IRON STORES²

When this happens, your existing iron stores must be used instead.^{9,10} This increases the risk of iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia.¹⁰

RISK OF IRON DEFICIENCY ANAEMIA INCREASES DURING PREGNANCY

As you progress through pregnancy, the risk of iron deficiency anaemia increases, with your body needing more iron during the second and third trimester.⁹ Iron demand during pregnancy rises steadily in proportion to your growing baby.⁹ You need more iron to increase the number of red blood cells for the growing baby and placenta.⁹

Some factors may put you at a higher risk of becoming iron deficient or developing iron deficiency anaemia during pregnancy:²

- If you already had low iron levels before you were pregnant
- If you have had another recent pregnancy
- If you are having twins or more

When you talk to your doctor, you may want to discuss these issues to ensure your iron levels are on track. Although your doctor or midwife will check for signs of iron deficiency anaemia,¹¹ you may still have iron deficiency without anaemia.¹² This can still have an impact.¹³

WHY IRON IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER WHEN YOU'RE PREGNANT



Evidence shows babies born with iron deficiency can have a lower IQ⁴

If you don't get enough iron, this can increase the risk of severe outcomes.² These may include:

- Risk of low birth weight or a premature birth⁵
- Impaired cognitive development of your child^{2,4}
- Potential large volume of blood loss (>500 ml) after the birth, known as postpartum haemorrhage^{2,14,15}

Iron deficiency anaemia in pregnancy can also increase the damage caused by ante- or postpartum blood loss.¹⁵

POST-NATAL RISKS OF IRON DEFICIENCY

Your iron levels might still be low after giving birth if you had iron deficiency during your pregnancy.¹⁴ Having iron deficiency anaemia after the birth of your baby may:

- Increase the likelihood of developing post-natal depression¹⁴
- Reduce your ability to fight infections¹⁴
- Cause feelings of stress and anxiety¹⁶

Furthermore, anaemia is associated with insufficient milk syndrome.¹⁷ Milk can be low on antibodies and its nutritional properties can be affected, and potentially impact the baby's immune system.¹⁸ Insufficient milk syndrome can also have an effect on how long you can breastfeed.¹⁷

Suffering from any of the above can be draining, making it even harder to care for your baby. But the good news is that the earlier iron deficiency is diagnosed, the earlier it can be treated.

Motherhood can be full of ups and downs –
IRON LEVELS shouldn't be one of them

BE AN IRON MUM

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