



2021 EDITION

# HOW TO GET IRON INFORMED

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT IRON DEFICIENCY ANEMIA (IDA)

This discussion guide is designed to help you talk to your doctor about your symptoms and any primary conditions that can co-exist with Iron Deficiency Anemia. When you don't have enough healthy red blood cells to carry enough oxygen to cells throughout the body, that's anemia.

IDA is the most common type of anemia. Keeping track of and sharing any symptoms with your doctor is key to managing your overall health and assessing all possibilities for why you may feel the way you do. It's also possible to have no symptoms at all, or that your symptoms could be indicative of another underlying condition. Keep in mind that this guide is a starter to begin a healthy conversation with your doctor to make sure you are both keeping track of your health and assessing why you may feel the way you do.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT IDA,  
GO TO [GETIRONINFORMED.COM](https://www.getironinformed.com)



Daiichi-Sankyo

# STEP 1. TRACK YOUR SYMPTOMS

Make sure to let your doctor know how often your symptoms occur or whether any of your existing conditions may put you at risk for IDA, when they began, and their severity. Keep in mind that signs and symptoms alone cannot diagnose IDA and some people do not have symptoms – specific blood tests are the only way to know for sure.

## 1. Do you find yourself feeling more tired lately?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 2. Have you noticed weak or brittle nails?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 3. Does your skin appear pale or dull?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 4. Do you find your hands or feet feeling cold, even when others do not feel cold?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 5. Do you find yourself feeling dizzy?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 6. Do you notice your heart beating faster than normal or have difficulty catching your breath, even when not exercising or doing something strenuous?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 7. Do you experience chest pain?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year

## 8. Do you find yourself craving or chewing on ice?

Yes      No

If yes, how often do you experience this symptom:

\_\_\_\_\_ x/week    \_\_\_\_\_ x/month    \_\_\_\_\_ x/year



# STEP 2. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR DOCTOR

While IDA can happen to anyone, people with certain medical conditions are at risk. The following groups are among those at risk for IDA:

- People with
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - Gastrointestinal (GI) diseases such as celiac disease or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
  - Peptic ulcer disease
  - Heart failure
- People who have undergone bariatric procedures such as gastric bypass
- African Americans
- Vegetarians, vegans and other people whose diets do not include iron-rich foods

IDA is a frequently underdiagnosed and underappreciated women's health issue. More than two in five women (42%) can't identify any of the common IDA risk factors. Women of childbearing age are at higher risk for IDA because of blood loss during long or abnormally heavy menstrual periods or bleeding fibroids, noncancerous growths in or on the uterus. Blood loss during childbirth may also cause low levels of iron in women and may contribute to IDA.

**Scheduling an appointment with your healthcare provider is the only way to check your iron levels. Below are some questions that can help you start the conversation:**

- Could my health condition(s) increase my risk of IDA?
- Have my iron levels been checked? What were the results of the last test?
- How often do you normally test my iron levels?
- Can I request a blood test, such as the below, to confirm if I have IDA, based on my new symptoms?
- Could my symptoms be indicative of another underlying medical condition?

## COMMON BLOOD TESTS:

**Hemoglobin (Hb):** a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen

**Ferritin:** a protein inside your cells that stores iron

**Transferrin Saturation (TSAT):** transferrin is a protein responsible for transporting iron

**Complete Blood Count:** measures several components of the blood

**If you feel you might be at risk, it's important to talk to your doctor about IDA and your iron levels**

**A SURVEY FOUND THAT THE AVERAGE TIME FOR WOMEN TO RECEIVE AN IDA DIAGNOSIS, FROM THE ONSET OF SYMPTOMS, IS ABOUT 4 YEARS. IF YOU FEEL YOU'RE AT RISK FOR IDA, DON'T WAIT TO TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ABOUT CHECKING YOUR IRON LEVELS.**



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## STEP 3. UNDERSTAND YOUR BLOOD TEST RESULTS

Values considered normal can vary for a number of reasons, depending on the person, whether they are male or female, their condition(s) and where the test is taken. It's important to discuss your lab results and numbers with your doctor.

Lab Markers	Normal Range	My Test Results
<b>Hemoglobin (Hb)</b>	13.5 - 17.5 g/dL (men) 12.0 - 15.5 g/dL (women)	
<b>Ferritin</b>	40 - 300 µg/L (men) 20 - 200 µg/L (women)	
<b>Transferrin saturation (TSAT)</b>	20% - 50%	

## STEP 4: IF YOUR IRON LEVELS ARE LOW, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

If your iron levels are low, ask your doctor the following:

- What can I do to try to increase my iron levels?
- Will I always have IDA or is it something that can be managed?
- What may be the long-term effects of IDA?
- Which treatment options are right for me?
- How do I know if my treatment is working?
- What are potential side effects of different treatment options?
- How long should my treatment take to be effective?
- What should I do if I experience side effects from oral iron supplements/IV iron?
- When should I have my iron levels tested again?

## NEXT STEPS:

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