

MONIFIETH MEDICAL PRACTICE

PRACTICE INFORMATION

What is iron deficiency anaemia?

Anaemia occurs when you have fewer red blood cells or less haemoglobin than normal, resulting in reduced oxygen transport in the blood. Iron deficiency is the leading cause of anaemia both in the UK and worldwide. Iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) occurs when the body lacks iron to produce enough red blood cells.

Causes of Iron Deficiency Anaemia:

A normal balanced diet will usually contain enough iron for your body's needs. A low level of iron, leading to anaemia, can result from various causes:

1. Excessive blood loss:
 - Bleeding from the gastrointestinal (GI) tract due to conditions like ulcers, colitis, or bowel cancers.
 - Menstrual periods (menorrhagia) in pre-menopausal women.
 - Chronic blood loss from kidney or bladder diseases.
2. Dietary inadequacy:
 - Vegetarians and vegans may be at higher risk due to the lower iron content in plant-based diets.
 - Elderly individuals with poor diets may also become deficient.
3. Poor absorption of iron:
 - Conditions like celiac disease can impair iron absorption.
 - Gastric surgeries or *Helicobacter pylori* colonisation may affect iron uptake.

Treatment:

To correct anaemia and replenish iron stores, your doctor may prescribe:

- **Oral iron:** e.g., Ferrous Sulphate 200mg twice daily. Alternative preparations can be discussed if not tolerated.
- Regular monitoring of full blood count to assess response to iron treatment.
- Continued iron treatment for three months after blood count normalises, followed by monitoring every three months for one year.

Dietary Advice:

Include iron-rich foods in your diet such as:

- Red meat, fish, and shellfish.
- Green leafy vegetables, beans, and pulses.
- Iron-fortified breakfast cereals.

For further dietary advice, visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Anaemia-iron-deficiency-/Pages/Treatment.aspx>