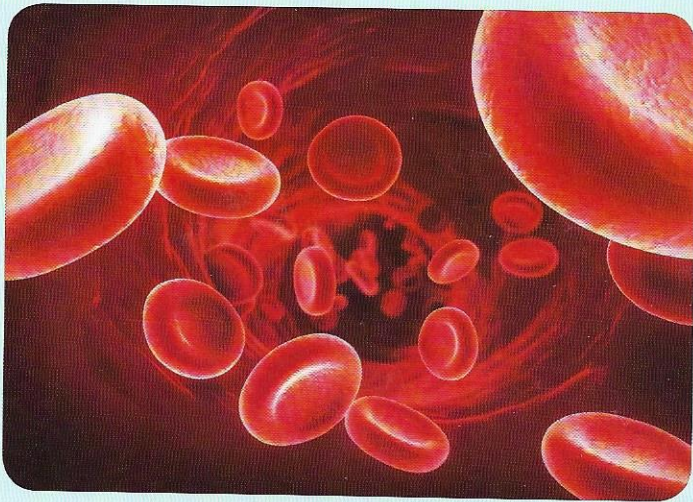


Facts About....

Low Iron

Low iron levels?

Low iron (or low hemoglobin level) is the most common reason for temporary deferral. If you have been deferred as a blood donor because of a low hemoglobin level, it does not necessarily mean that you are anemic or cannot donate in the future. In fact, in most cases a simple change in your diet is all that is needed to increase your hemoglobin level (and improve your overall health too!).



What is iron and hemoglobin?

The Blood Center measures each donor's hemoglobin level - the iron containing protein found in red blood cells that binds to oxygen. Red blood cells transport oxygen through the blood stream to all parts of the body. Hemoglobin correlates to the amount of iron in your blood. If your iron levels are low, your hemoglobin is low as well.

Donors must maintain adequate iron levels so that the drop in red blood cells that accompanies blood donation does not compromise the body's normal hemoglobin oxygen transport function.

Women and iron?

Women are unique in so many ways-from the demands they put on their bodies to the way in which their bodies respond.

Starting at adolescence, a woman's daily iron needs increase. Women need more iron because they lose blood each month as a result of menstruation.



How does diet affect iron levels?

Your iron level can generally be increased by a change in diet. Between donations, you can help your body build and replenish its iron supply by adding more iron rich foods to your diet.

(see reverse for suggested foods to add to your diet)

For some people, diet alone is not enough. If desired, you may talk to your doctor about iron supplements or other options.