

**ANEMIA IN PREGNANCY: CAUSES, TYPES, SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS, RISK  
FACTORS, PREVENTION , DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT**

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**A SEMINAR PRESENTED**

**TO THE  
PREGNANT WOMEN IN ANTENATAL WARD,  
RCCG , ANAMBRA PROVINCE 1 MATERNITY**

**ANAMBRA STATE .**

**JUNE, 2020**

## **SUMMARY**

Anemia in pregnancy is a major health problem in many countries including Nigeria. Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anemia in pregnancy. All pregnant women are at risk of anemia most especially when one is pregnant with more than one child, have had 2 pregnancies close together, don't eat enough food that is rich in iron and had anemia before getting pregnant.

Some of the major symptoms of anemia during pregnancy are fatigue, weakness, fast heart breath, pale skin, lips and nails. They can be prevented or treated through intake of iron supplement, folic acid supplement and vitamin B12 supplement.

## INTRODUCTION

Anemia can be defined as a type of red cell disorder that occurs when the concentration of hemoglobin falls below what is normal for a person's age, gender and environment, resulting in the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood being reduced.

According to WHO, Anemia in pregnancy is defined as a hemoglobin concentration (HB) of less than 110g/L (less than 11g/dl) in various blood.

During pregnancy the body produces more blood to support the growth of the baby. If the body is not getting enough iron or certain other nutrients, the body might not be able to produce the amount of red blood cells. It needs to make this additional blood.

## **CAUSES OF ANEMIA DURING PREGNANCY**

1. Lack of essential nutrients e.g. Iron, folate and vitamin B12.
2. **Infections:** malaria, HIV
3. Acute or chronic blood loss (Gastrointestinal bleeding).

## **TYPES OF ANEMIA DURING PREGNANCY**

There are many types of anemia, but some are more prevalent. The most commonly experienced types of anemia during pregnancy are:

- 1. Iron deficiency anemia:** Insufficient iron for hemoglobin production leads to iron deficiency in iron-deficiency anemia. The blood cannot carry enough to tissue throughout the body and it is the most common cause of anemia in pregnancy.
- 2. Vitamin B12 deficiency:** when a pregnant woman doesn't get enough vitamin B12 from her diet, her body cannot produce enough healthy red blood cells.
- 3. Folate-deficiency anemia:** Lack of folic acid (supplement that can be found in vegetable, cereals, banana, melons, legumes etc. can lead to a reduced number of red blood cells in the body, therefore leading to a deficiency.

# **SYMPTOMS OF ANAMEIA DURING PREGNANCY**

The most common symptoms of anemia during pregnancy are: -

1. Pale skin, lips and nails
2. Dizziness
3. Fast heart breath
4. Weakness
5. Fatigue

# **RISK FACTORS FOR ANAEMIA IN PREGNANCY**

All pregnant women are at risk for becoming anemia. That's because they need more iron and folic acid than usual. But the risk is high if:

1. One is pregnant with multiple (more than one child)
2. Have had two pregnancies close together
3. Vomit a lot because of morning sickness
4. Don't eat enough food that are rich in iron
5. Had anemia before getting pregnant

# **PREVENTION OF ANEMIA DURING PREGNANCY**

To prevent anemia during pregnancy, make sure you get enough iron, eat well balanced meal and add more foods that are high in iron to your diet.

## **DIAGNOSIS OF ANEMIA**

- 1. Hemoglobin test** – it measures the amount to hemoglobin
- 2. Hematocrit test:** It measures the percentage of red blood cells in a sample of blood.

## **TREATMENT OF ANEMIA DURING PREGNANCY**

When anemia is detected, one needs to start taking iron supplement, folic acid supplement and vitamin B12 supplement.

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