



Health Promotion Administration

Ministry of Health and Welfare

News Release

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Pregnancy Booking! Iron Storage before Pregnancy-The First Step towards a Baby's Health

Adequate nutrients for pregnant mothers are the key to the healthy growth of infants. In order to transfer vital nutrients to help babies develop healthily, the iron requirement during pregnancy is higher compared to the average adult. The Health Promotion Administration, Ministry of Health and Welfare (HPA) appeals to pregnant women to consume iron-rich food before getting pregnant to adjust the body to its sound healthy state and have healthy babies.

About 20% of women of childbearing age are anemic.

According to the HPA's results of Nutrition and Health Survey 2015-2018, the ratio of anemia in women of childbearing age (15-49 years old) accounts for 18.6% (heme concentrations of <12 g/dL are considered anemic). The ratio has decreased year by year (the ratios of anemia for 2013-2016 and 2014-2017 accounted for 22.40% and 19.54%, respectively).

Women from after puberty to menopause lose menstrual blood every month, putting them at high risk of anemia. The symptoms of anemia include fatigue, drowsiness, dizziness, physical decline, pale complexion, etc. The most common type of anemia is iron-deficiency anemia. During pregnancy, pregnant mothers will have an increased blood volume due to physiological changes. Moreover, heavy bleeding during childbirth and iron loss due to breastfeeding will lead to the mother's increasing iron demand. Iron is an important element for manufacturing maternal and fetal hemoglobin. Iron deficiency during pregnancy may result in premature birth and

low birth weight. The iron needed by newborns in the first four months comes from the mother. If iron fails to be adequately reserved during pregnancy, it may result in the baby's retarded growth and development.

Pay attention to the principles of iron intake before pregnancy and store key nutrients

According to the HPA's recommended "Dietary Reference Intakes, DRIs," the recommended daily iron intake for adult women is 15mg. The dietary principles for reducing anemia are as follows:

- **Eat more iron-rich foods** : Consume iron-rich foods in daily life, such as seafood (clam, octopus, oyster, etc.), liver, and red meat. However, the recommended daily intake should not be exceeded.
- **Eat more dark vegetables** : Iron-rich animal foods often have high-fat content; while dark green vegetables, such as amaranth, sweet peas, Gynura bicolor, etc. have lower iron absorption rates but they can also be a good source of iron.
- **Increase vitamin C intake** : During or after a meal, consume fresh seasonal fruits that are rich in vitamin C to promote iron absorption.
- **Avoid drinking tea during a meal** : The tannic acid in tea and iron will form insoluble compounds and reduce iron absorption by nearly 50%. It is recommended that beverages should be avoided during meals.

It is recommended that adult women who are experiencing symptoms of anemia undergo a blood test. Women who plan to have a baby should pay attention to their nutritional intake before getting pregnant. Consult a dietician if necessary to improve diet or take supplements under the prescription and guidance of a doctor.

Prenatal Checkup and Nutrition Consultation Services for Pregnant Women - Healthy Pregnancy Booking

In order to understand the health status of mothers and their babies and detect anomalies early for early treatment, Taiwan offers 10 free prenatal checkups for pregnant women. The first routine blood test of the first prenatal checkup includes a

hemoglobin concentration test and two 1-on-1 health education and guidance services in order to increase the nutritional health knowledge of expectant mothers during pregnancy. For any nutrition-related questions before, during, and after pregnancy, please call the maternal care advisory hotline at 0800-870-870. Our professional personnel is waiting to answer your calls (we provide call-back service). You may also visit the Website of Maternal and Infant Healthcare (<https://mammy.hpa.gov.tw/>) to search for information on prenatal care. Expectant mothers and fathers are encouraged to visit our website often!



■ Website of Maternal and Infant Healthcare: QR Code

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