



## Iron Deficiency Anemia and Its Persistent Presence in Developed Populations

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### DESCRIPTION

Iron Deficiency Anemia is one of the most common nutritional disorders worldwide, affecting individuals across all age groups. Even in developed cities such as New York, where access to diverse food sources and healthcare services is widely available, this condition continues to appear in clinical practice. It occurs when the body lacks adequate iron to produce sufficient hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells responsible for carrying oxygen throughout the body. Iron plays an essential role in maintaining normal physiological functions. It is required for the production of hemoglobin and supports energy metabolism and immune function. When iron levels fall below the required threshold, the body's ability to transport oxygen becomes impaired. This leads to symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, and reduced physical endurance. In many cases, these symptoms develop gradually and may not be immediately recognized. Dietary habits are a significant factor contributing to iron deficiency anemia. In developed urban environments, individuals often consume diets that are high in processed foods but low in nutrient density. While calorie intake may be sufficient or even excessive, the intake of essential nutrients such as iron may still be inadequate. People who follow restrictive diets, including vegetarian or vegan patterns without proper planning, may also be at risk due to lower intake of iron-rich animal products.

Women of reproductive age are particularly susceptible to iron deficiency anemia due to menstrual blood loss. Pregnancy further increases iron requirements, as the body must support both maternal and fetal needs. Without adequate supplementation or dietary adjustments, iron stores can become depleted. In developed healthcare systems, routine screening during pregnancy helps identify and manage this condition, yet it remains a common concern. Children and adolescents are another group at risk. Rapid growth during these stages increases the demand for iron, and inadequate intake can lead to deficiency. In urban settings, dietary preferences among younger populations often include processed snacks and sugary beverages, which do not provide sufficient iron. This can affect

physical development, cognitive performance, and overall health. Chronic medical conditions can also contribute to iron deficiency anemia. Disorders that affect the gastrointestinal system may impair the absorption of iron, even when dietary intake is adequate. Additionally, conditions that cause chronic blood loss, such as ulcers or certain inflammatory diseases, can reduce iron levels over time. In developed healthcare environments, diagnostic tools allow for the identification of these underlying causes.

Diagnosis of iron deficiency anemia involves laboratory testing to measure hemoglobin levels, serum iron, and other related parameters. Healthcare providers may also assess dietary habits and medical history to determine the cause of the deficiency. Early detection is important, as untreated anemia can lead to complications such as reduced work capacity, impaired immune response, and decreased quality of life. Management focuses on restoring iron levels and addressing the underlying cause. Dietary changes are often the first step, with an emphasis on increasing the intake of iron-rich foods. These include red meat, poultry, fish, legumes, leafy green vegetables, and fortified cereals. Combining iron-rich foods with sources of vitamin C can improve absorption, making dietary adjustments more effective. In many cases, iron supplementation is required to correct the deficiency. Oral iron tablets are commonly prescribed and are generally effective when taken as directed. In more severe cases or when absorption is impaired, intravenous iron therapy may be considered. Developed healthcare systems provide access to these treatment options, allowing for effective management of the condition.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, iron deficiency anemia reflects a complex interaction between dietary habits, physiological needs, and underlying health conditions. Through proper diagnosis, targeted treatment, and preventive strategies, individuals can restore healthy iron levels and improve their overall well-being. Proper nutrition and regular health monitoring help reduce the impact of this common but manageable disorder.

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