

Anaemia...

A shortage of haemoglobin, the red pigment in blood cells which transport oxygen. The most common cause is the lack of adequate dietary iron, although excessive loss of blood through menstruation or a stomach ulcer can contribute. Symptoms and signs of anaemia include fatigue, dizziness, breathlessness, poor concentration, recurring colds and infections, pallor and white eyelid lining. In children mental development can be retarded and behavioral problems can occur.

Treatment

* increase your intake of food rich easily absorbed iron. Good sources are: beef, pork, lamb, organ meats, poultry, fish, cooked dried beans, dark green leafy vegetables, dried fruits. Animal products provide more easily absorbable iron than vegetables.

* to increase iron absorption, incorporate vitamin C from citrus fruit or juices (orange, grapefruit or lemon) in to your meals. Do not drink tea before, during or after meals as this inhibits iron absorption.

* large doses of iron supplement may cause stomach upsets and constipation, and can be fatal in children. They could also compete with other minerals leading to nutrition imbalances. If you have to take supplements it is advisable to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement which includes copper, iron, selenium, vitamin B2, B6, B12 folic acid, vitamin C and vitamin E.

Chinese medicine

* aims at restoring the body's ability to absorb iron by stimulating the spleen with return spleen tablets, also known as gui pi wan.

Biochemic Tissue Salts

* Calc Phos, 4 times daily, helps form healthy red blood cells.

* Ferr Phos, 4 times daily, aids absorption of dietary iron.

Professional help

* acupuncture has been shown to help anaemia

Orthodox

* your doctor will look for the underlying cause of anaemia and treat it. If there is no apparent cause, iron injections or tablets are usually given.