

# How to Deal with Low Red Blood Cells

## Low Red Blood Cells

Chemotherapy and radiation can affect the bone marrow where all your blood cells are made. The red blood cells are the oxygen-carrying cells in your body. When your red blood cells are low, you may become anemic.

## When to Call Your Nurse

You should call your nurse if you:

- are tired (fatigue)
- have shortness of breath
- feel lightheaded
- are dizzy
- have a fast heart rate
- have a headache
- feel weak
- have a pale skin color.

## What to Do if Your Red Blood Cell Count is Low

- Eat foods rich in iron such as green leafy vegetables.
- Change your activities to get enough rest.
- Do light exercises if possible every day.
- Save your energy for those activities that are most important to you.
- Pace your activities around your energy level.
- Change your positions slowly.
- If your red blood cells become too low, you may need a blood transfusion.

Your red blood cell count will get better. Until then, it is important to follow the advice above and to listen to your body.

Ask your nurse if you have any questions.