



Information brochure for patients

Revitalise your life with iron

Take the fight on iron deficiency!



www.eisencheck.at

Dear Patient,

- Do you feel tired, lethargic, exhausted?
- Do you often have the feeling that everything is spinning around you?
- Are you prone to hair loss or brittle nails?
- Do you suffer from sleep problems or low mood?

Symptoms of iron deficiency

Central nervous system

Tiredness, exhaustion
Light-headedness, dizziness
Headaches
Depression
Difficulty concentrating
Restless legs syndrome

Immune system

Impaired immunity

Muscles

Rapid fatigue
Reduced exercise capacity

Skin and vascular system

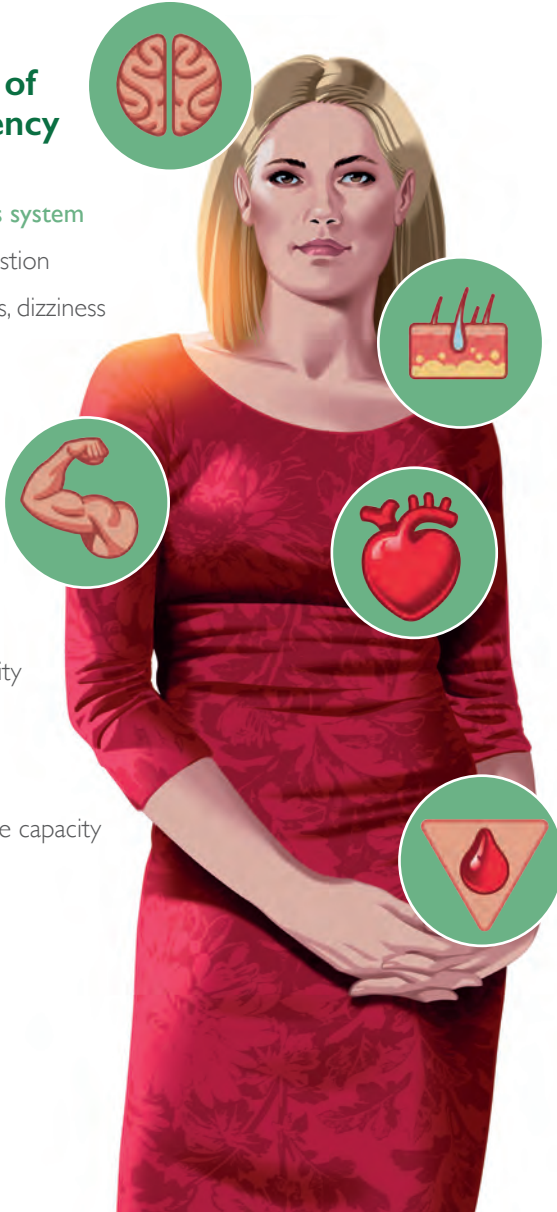
Hair loss
Cracks at the corners of the mouth
Brittle nails
Cold intolerance
Pale skin, mucous membranes and eye tissues

Heart and respiratory system

Shortness of breath
Palpitations

Genital area

Menstrual problems
Loss of libido

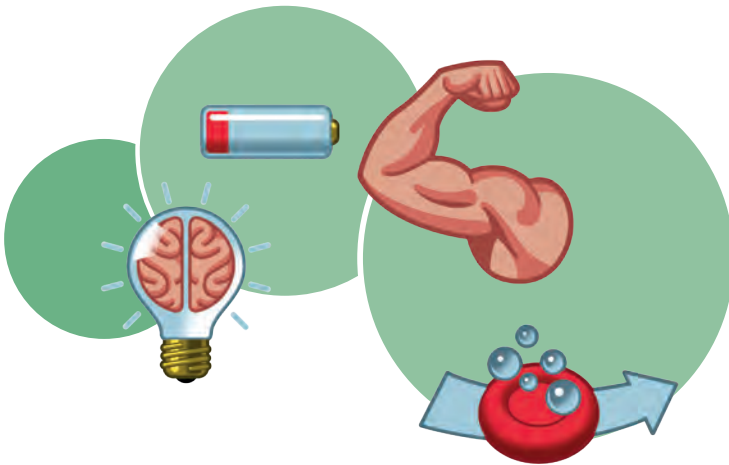


Why are the symptoms of iron deficiency so varied?

Iron is an essential trace element that is present in all body cells. It is involved in many bodily functions, including:

- Oxygen transport in the blood
- Immune cell formation
- Energy production in cells and muscle activity
- Protein metabolism
- Brain function

It is because of these many roles iron plays in the body that the symptoms of iron deficiency are so varied. And that is why it is not very easy to recognise iron deficiency. If you notice that you have one or more of the symptoms listed, ask your doctor:



The cause of these symptoms may be iron deficiency.

Iron deficiency occurs when the body does not get as much iron as it needs for a prolonged period. Over time, iron stores are depleted and various symptoms occur. The body needs iron to transport oxygen to all the organs in the body. Iron deficiency can even lead to a chronic increase in the amount of blood the heart pumps, putting a strain on your heart.



Why have I got no energy left?

The possible cause: iron deficiency

Iron deficiency is more common than you may think! In Austria, it affects one in four women between 15 and 50 years of age. In men, iron deficiency tends to occur in old age, but young men can also be affected (particularly athletes and those with chronic diseases).^{1,2}

What are the possible consequences of iron deficiency?

If iron deficiency remains undetected and untreated, it leads to iron deficiency anaemia (anaemia = lack of red blood cells). Far too often, it is not until this stage that iron deficiency is discovered.

Iron deficiency diagnosis by your specialist

Diagnosis based on a blood test provides certainty. The important blood markers are:

- **Ferritin** (lower cutoff 30 ng/ml)²
- **Transferrin saturation** (lower cutoff 20%)²

In suspected cases, these values should be checked as part of the screening process.



Find specialists near you here



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Who is prone to iron deficiency?

Certain population groups are at increased risk of iron deficiency.²



- Women of childbearing age. Especially if they have heavy periods



- Women who are trying to conceive, who are pregnant or who have just given birth



- Athletes

- Elderly people



- Growing children and adolescents

- Patients with chronic conditions (e.g. heart failure, bowel disease, kidney failure, rheumatism)



- Vegetarians and vegans



- Blood donors

- People who are about to have or have just had an operation

How does iron deficiency come about?

Increased need

- Pregnancy, breastfeeding
- Growth and development in adolescents
- Competitive sport
- Regular blood donation

Inadequate dietary iron intake

- Unbalanced diet
- Vegetarian/vegan diet
- Taking of proton pump inhibitors (stomach protection)
- After stomach surgery
- Food intolerance (e.g. coeliac disease)

High blood loss

- After giving birth
- Heavy periods
- Chronic bleeding (e.g. in the gastro-intestinal tract)
- After surgery involving high blood loss
- As a result of accident or injury

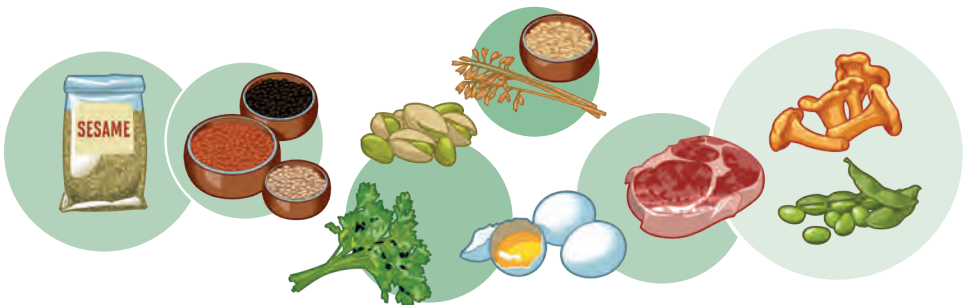
Chronic conditions

- Inflammatory bowel disorders (e.g. Crohn's disease)
- Chronic heart conditions
- Cancer
- Kidney function disorders
- Autoimmune conditions
- Diabetes and obesity

How can iron deficiency be rectified?

Change of diet

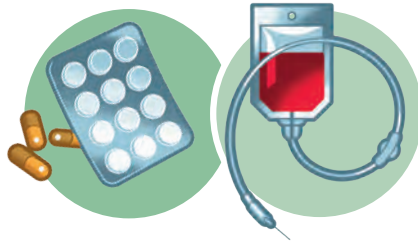
In cases of mild iron deficiency, changing or adapting the diet may help, especially if there are no problems with iron absorption in the digestive tract and no chronic conditions.



How can iron deficiency be rectified?

Oral iron therapy

In cases of iron deficiency without anaemia, treatment with iron tablets, capsules or solutions, known as oral iron therapy, is the first choice. These products should be taken over a period of several weeks to months, however, in order to replenish depleted iron stores. If this treatment does not work, causes side effects or cannot be used for other reasons, an iron infusion is the treatment of choice.



If your doctor establishes that you have iron deficiency, he/she will work with you to pick the best treatment.

Intravenous iron therapy

The quickest way to replenish depleted iron stores is to administer iron preparations directly into a vein. This makes the iron available to the body immediately.

What needs to be borne in mind when treating this condition?

Besides the optimal dose of iron, it is necessary to determine the causes of the iron deficiency. An underlying condition that it is essential to treat may be present.

In most cases, a check-up is carried out after iron therapy in order to assess your response to treatment. On the basis of this, your doctor can make a decision regarding further treatment steps.

Important: The cause of the iron deficiency should always be clarified. Follow-up by the treating doctor is also important.

You might be affected!

Simply complete a quick self-test at www.eisencheck.at and find more information.



www.eisencheck.at



References:

- 1 Gasche, C., et. al, Eisenmangel ohne Anämie, Expertenempfehlung zu Definitionen, Diagnostik, Vorgehen, Wien klin. Magazin 2021.
- 2 Weiss, G., et. al, Consensus Statement Eisenmangel, Österreichische Ärztezeitung, Supplementum, 2022.

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