

## **BROADCAST-Tired all the time? It could be symptom of anemia**

If you're feeling tired all the time, even after cutting back on a busy schedule, it might be a sign of something more serious. Ongoing fatigue that zaps your energy and motivation is a symptom of anemia – a condition that comes in as many as 400 different types ... some of which are easily treated with the right supplements, medication and monitoring.

Trish Clevenger, is a primary charge nurse for infusion services at the Moeller Cancer Center at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center in Alton, Illinois. Anemia caused by an iron deficiency affects as many as 5 million people in the U.S. As a sole provider of hematology services in the region, Clevenger says her infusion clinic is a busy place. Treatment for anemia can be brief or ongoing, depending on the type.

**“If it's not strictly diet-related, many times for women it can be related to their menstrual cycle and how that affects their body. It can also be related to trauma or surgery, where there was increased blood loss. For many of those patients, once we've treated the acute issue, then the patient doesn't see us except potentially on an as-needed basis.” (:26)**

Sickle cell anemia, which is an inherited chronic disease that in the U.S. affects mostly those who are Black, often results in painful episodes that in some cases requires hospitalization, especially when not managed properly. But, Clevenger says with the right treatment and management, individuals with a sickle cell diagnosis can live long, productive lives.

**“Those patients will be on multiple oral medications and monitoring very closely to keep them at a healthy level, watching their iron and their hemoglobin and helping them to stay as functional as possible.” (:17)**

A B12 vitamin deficiency is a common cause of anemia brought on by problems producing red blood cells that are needed to bring oxygen to organs and tissues throughout the body. Clevenger says it's very treatable.

**“Many times we start with oral (medication) if possible, but if the oral isn't tolerated or absorbed, then we do injections and then it's just continuous monitoring. Most of those patients we will monitor every three months, and then of course they give us a call if they have issues and symptoms.” (:19)**

Clevenger says anemia treatment plans often also include dietary changes.

**“A healthy diet (includes) non-processed foods; eating healthy, high-iron foods. If you're not a meat eater, that's ok. Spinach and beans will have the same amount of iron in them as any meats that we eat and more than some.” (:17)**

While a multi-vitamin can also help, Clevenger says it's not a replacement for a healthy diet and before taking supplements of any kind, it's best to consult your primary care provider.