

Your Journey with Iron Deficiency Anemia



For more information scan this QR code or go to myhealth.alberta.ca/iron-deficiency-anemia-pathway

Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anemia. Iron deficiency anemia means that your body doesn't have the iron it needs to make enough [red blood cells](#). Since red blood cells carry oxygen to the tissues in your body, it is important to have enough iron.

You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you to know what to expect as you work with your team to manage and treat Iron deficiency anemia. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your healthcare team.

Before your appointment [\(page 5\)](#)

- Write down how you feel, and your questions, symptoms, and concerns.
- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you.



Visit your healthcare provider [\(page 6\)](#)

- Share all of your symptoms and concerns. Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.
- In order to better manage your health condition, your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand who you are and what matters to you.



Get your tests [\(page 8\)](#)

Your tests and assessments may include:

- Blood Tests
- Depending on your symptoms, other tests or procedures may be required.



Review your test results [\(page 10\)](#)

- You may find your test results on MyHealth Alberta Account or MyChart (myhealth.alberta.ca/account) or ask your healthcare provider to print them for you.
- Talk with your healthcare provider so you know what your test results mean and how they will help your team and you decide what to do next.



Review your treatment options [\(page 11\)](#)

- Explore the different options to manage the iron deficiency:
 - Increase the amount of iron in your diet
 - Use medications like iron supplement pills or intravenous infusions
- Explore the different treatment options to manage the underlying cause of your iron deficiency anemia, if applicable.
- Decide with your healthcare provider what will work best for you.



Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral [\(page 13\)](#)

- Your healthcare provider may need advice from a specialist or may suggest you see another healthcare provider (referral) based on your specific needs.
- Ask who you are being sent to and what they do.
- Ask how long it will take to be seen and what you should do if you don't hear back.



Start your treatment & watch your symptoms [\(page 14\)](#)

- Take an active role in your treatment. If treatment side effects are severe or not improving, speak with your healthcare provider.
- Make sure to tell your healthcare provider right away or call 811 if you have heavy bleeding, passing large clots, are feeling dizzy, weak, feverish, or have severe abdominal pain.



Keep taking care of yourself [\(page 18\)](#)

- Keep taking care of your overall health.
- Look for other healthy-lifestyle resources and supports.



Whole-person health
[\(page 2\)](#)

Important Tips:

Need to connect with a primary care clinic?
albertfindaprovider.ca

Need a translator?
Let your healthcare provider know

Need health advice?
Call Health Link at 811

Need to find programs and resources in your community?
Call 211 or visit ab.211.ca

How to use this resource

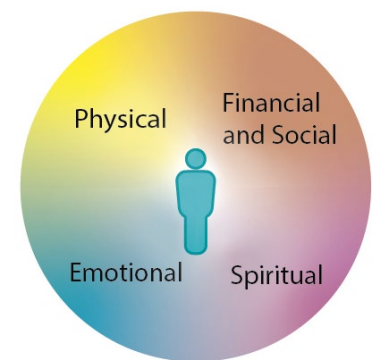
Healthcare professionals, along with patients and family advisors in Alberta, wrote this pathway using the best available evidence. It is meant as general health information to help you know what to expect as you work with your healthcare team. But everyone has their own unique journey with iron deficiency anemia. This pathway does not replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Always talk with your healthcare team and follow their recommendations for your specific care.

Whole-person health

The whole-person health approach will help you and your healthcare team better manage your health condition. It is drawn from the teachings of the medicine wheel.

Whole-person health means thinking about all parts of your health and wellness: physical, financial and social, spiritual, and emotional. All of these parts are connected and influence each other. It's important to be aware of your personal needs in each part and to share that information with your healthcare team.

- **Physical:** your specific health conditions and how well your body works
- **Financial and Social:** your ability to meet your housing, transportation, food, and health needs, feeling supported to manage your daily life, and having meaningful relationships
- **Spiritual:** your beliefs, sense of connection, and purpose
- **Emotional:** how you think, feel, and cope with life events



Whole-person health

Whole-person health also reminds us that we are all connected and work together: you, your support systems, and your healthcare providers. Your healthcare providers could be your doctor, nurse practitioner, or a team that comes together with you to plan and organize your care.

Your healthcare provider needs to understand who you are and what matters to you. This helps to build trust. But it can be hard to know what to share or what to say. Try starting by asking yourself:

“What are the things in my life that are important to me?”

“What are the things in my life that may be affecting my health and well-being?”



Bringing up what matters to you is important. Here are some examples of things you may want to talk about with your healthcare provider:

Physical

- Why do I feel so tired even after resting?
- Why do I feel dizzy or light-headed?
- I feel short of breath, especially when walking or exercising now.
- When I do simple activities, they feel harder than they used to.

Financial and Social

- What if I can't afford my medications or supplements?
- Are there lower-cost iron supplements that work just as well?
- How can I eat iron-rich foods if groceries are expensive?
- Is there help to pay for special foods or nutrition support?

Emotional

- Why do I feel more irritable or emotional than usual?
- I feel anxious about my test results — what do they really mean?
- Why does everything feel harder to cope with right now?

Spiritual

- It's important that I follow traditional healing practices.
- How can I include my culture's foods and family recipes in my nutrition plan?
- It's important that my religious practice of fasting is respected and brought into my care.

What is iron deficiency anemia?

Iron deficiency is the most common cause of anemia. Iron deficiency anemia means that your body doesn't have the iron it needs to make enough [red blood cells](#). Having enough iron is important, since red blood cells carry oxygen to the tissues in your body. With fewer red blood cells, your blood isn't able to carry enough oxygen to the cells in your body. This can make you feel weak and tired or dizzy.

[Iron deficiency anemia](#) is caused by low levels of iron in the body. This can happen when:

- you're not getting enough iron in your diet. This can happen in people who need a lot of iron, such as small children, teens, and people who are pregnant.
- your body isn't absorbing enough iron This problem may occur if you have celiac disease, or if you've had part of your stomach or small intestine removed.
- you have prolonged bleeding, such as heavy monthly periods or bleeding inside your body from [stomach ulcers](#), [hemorrhoids](#), or cancer. Bleeding inside the body is the most common cause of iron deficiency anemia in men, and in women after menopause.

Symptoms

You may not notice the symptoms of iron deficiency anemia. That's because it may develop slowly, and your symptoms may be mild. As anemia gets worse, you may:

- feel weak and tired more easily
- feel short of breath during exercise
- get headaches
- faint
- feel dizzy
- look more pale than usual
- crave non-food items like ice

Other signs may include:

- rapid heartbeat
- chest pain
- brittle fingernails and toenails
- cracked lips
- smooth, sore tongue
- muscle pain during exercise
- trouble swallowing
- strong urge to move your legs when at rest (restless legs)
- bleeding (like nose bleeds or heavy menstrual periods)

Your healthcare provider will try to find the cause of the anemia and treat that problem. Most people start to feel better after treatment begins.

If you think you have anemia, see your healthcare provider. Do not try to treat yourself.

- **Taking iron pills could delay the diagnosis of a serious problem, such as a bleeding ulcer or colon cancer.**
- **If the anemia is not caused by iron deficiency, taking iron pills won't relieve the anemia. And it may cause you to have too much iron in your blood, or even iron poisoning.**

Before your appointment

Here are a few tips to help you get ready for your appointment with your healthcare provider:

- Consider using a symptom tracker to write down important information to share with your healthcare team about your symptoms.
- A symptom tracker can help you remember what symptoms you're feeling, when they started, how often they happen, and what makes them better or worse.
- Write down a list of your questions and concerns. When you're done, read your list and mark the most important things.
- Make a list of the prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medicines you use, including any vitamins, herbs, and supplements.
- Ask someone you trust to go with you to your appointment. They can help you ask questions, write down instructions, and remember explanations.



Helpful tools and resources

- **Use a symptom tracker:** www.hqa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/HQA-2025-PIC-Symptom-Tracker-F-LowRes.pdf (Health Quality Alberta)
- To get the most out of your visit, plan to write notes during the visit or see the Alberta Health Services **My Care Conversations app** (ahs.ca/careapp) website for
- more information about recording your conversation with your healthcare provider.



Visit your healthcare provider

Healthcare provider's assessment

Your healthcare provider may ask you questions about your health, daily habits, and medical history. This helps them understand what might be causing your symptoms. Iron deficiency anemia needs to be diagnosed by your care provider. If they think you have iron deficiency anemia, they will order laboratory tests to confirm if you do. Your care provider may need to order additional tests to find the cause of the anemia if it is not clear from your history or physical exam. It is important that your care provider is the one who advises treatment. Do not treat yourself for iron deficiency anemia without asking your care provider.

What should I share with my healthcare provider?

- How are your symptoms affecting your activities of daily life, such as your job, hobbies and interests?
- What has worked for you in the past to manage your current condition?
- What types of things help you work better with your healthcare team and what do you expect and need from the relationship with your healthcare provider?

There are lots of things in your life that can impact your ability to manage your health, like:

- Problems with money, housing, and access to transportation
- Alcohol or drug use
- Not enough support or help
- Childhood experiences

It's important to talk about these things with your healthcare provider because they all play a role in your health and well-being.



You are the most important part of your healthcare team.

If you don't understand what your healthcare team is telling you, let them know right away. Be open and honest. You might say:

"This is new to me. Could you please explain it slowly, using language that is easier to understand?"

"It sounded like you said that I should... Did I understand that correctly?"

"Can you show me a picture or model to help me understand?"



Helpful tools and resources

- Making the most of your appointment:
myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=hw226888
- Working with your healthcare team: hqa.ca/info (Health Quality Alberta)





Get your tests

After your healthcare provider talks with you about which tests they recommend, you will need to [book an appointment](#) at a laboratory to have your blood tests completed. Your provider may give you a paper requisition to take with you to the lab or they may fax it in for you. Be sure to confirm with your healthcare provider if there are any tests on the requisition that may require you to fast (not eat), or that may require you to provide a urine (pee) or stool (poo) sample. The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan covers the cost of this testing. If you do not have the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan, please speak to your care provider and laboratory about any cost that may exist.

Laboratory tests

Complete blood count (CBC):

- This test can tell if you have anemia and often gives clues about what might be causing it. However, because anemia can have many different causes, this test does not always give a clear answer.
- This test:
 - Counts how many red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets you have.
 - Checks the size of your red blood cells.
 - Measures how much of your blood is made up of red blood cells.
 - Measures how much hemoglobin (the part that carries oxygen) is in your red blood cells.
- Learn more about the [complete blood count \(CBC\)](#).

Ferritin:

- This test measures the amount of ferritin, which is a protein that shows how much iron is stored in your body.
- Low ferritin levels usually mean low iron stores.
- Infection or inflammation can cause ferritin levels to be high even when your iron levels are low.
- Learn more about the [ferritin test](#).



Iron test:

- These tests measure how much iron is in your blood and how well your body is using that iron.
- There are a few different iron tests. Examples include:
 - Serum iron
 - Total iron-binding capacity (TIBC)
 - Iron saturation index
- Learn more about [iron tests](#).

Other tests

Finding the cause of low iron is important. In some people, the reason is clear. For example, anemia is common during pregnancy or in people who have heavy menstrual periods. If the cause is not clear, your healthcare provider may recommend more tests.

It is also possible to have more than one type of anemia at the same time. Your healthcare provider may suggest more blood tests to better understand what's going on and make sure that you are getting the right treatment.

Examples of other tests your healthcare provider may suggest include:

Tests to check your stomach or bowel for bleeding:

- These tests may be recommended even if you do not have stomach or bowel symptoms, especially in older adults.
- May include a test that looks into your stomach using a small camera (gastroscopy or [endoscopy](#)).
- Your bowel may also be checked using a [colonoscopy](#) or [sigmoidoscopy](#).
- In some cases, a [CT scan](#) of your abdomen may be used instead.

Blood tests for celiac disease: if your doctor wants to check if your body is absorbing enough iron. Sometimes, a small sample of the bowel lining (biopsy) may also be taken to confirm the diagnosis.

Pelvic ultrasound: If you have heavy menstrual periods, your healthcare provider might order an [ultrasound](#).

If the cause of your anemia is still unclear, your healthcare provider may recommend other tests. They will explain the reasons for any tests and help you understand what to expect.





Review your test results

It is important to know what your test results are and what they mean for you personally. Take time to discuss your results with your healthcare provider. Medical terms can be hard to understand. And even common words like “positive” or “negative” might mean something different for medical tests. Ask your healthcare provider for explanations and examples to make sure you fully understand.

You might ask:

“What does this mean for me?”

“Is there a current concern? If so, what is it?”



Helpful tools and resources

You may find some of your results and health information using secure online tools:

MyHealth Alberta Account

See your lab results, immunizations, and some other results with a MyHealth Alberta Account. Sign up at myhealth.alberta.ca/account

MyChart

See your health information, manage some appointments, and interact directly with some members of your healthcare team. Learn more at ahs.ca/mychart.





Review your iron deficiency anemia treatment options

Managing iron deficiency anemia requires a personalized approach. Based on your test results, your healthcare team will talk with you about different options to manage your iron deficiency anemia.

Making dietary changes

Eat foods with a lot of iron such as:

- Meat, poultry, wild game, and shellfish
- Eggs
- Dried beans and lentils
- Molasses
- Nuts
- Dried fruits like raisins, dates, and apricots



Image: iStock

For more information on how to get more iron in your diet, visit:

- [Iron and Your Health](#)
- [Healthy Vegetarian Eating](#)
- [Getting Enough Iron](#)

To help prevent anemia in children, make sure to follow dietary recommendations. For more information on iron for children, visit: [Iron Foods for Children Ages 1 and Up](#).

During pregnancy, prenatal vitamins that include iron can be taken.



Helpful tools and resources

- If you'd like to connect with nutrition programs or services in your area, visit: ahs.ca/nutrition
- [811 Health Link](#) has registered dietitians available to answer any nutrition questions you may have. Call 811 to talk to a registered dietitian or [fill out an online form](#) to request a call with a registered dietitian.

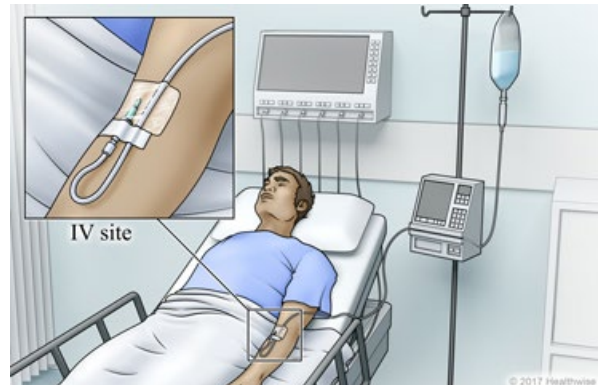


Medical treatment options

If you have iron deficiency anemia, your healthcare provider may suggest taking iron supplement pills. Taking iron supplement pills and getting enough iron from your food will correct most cases of iron deficiency anemia.

You may start to feel better after a few weeks of taking iron supplement pills. But don't stop taking them, even if you feel better. You'll need to keep taking the pills for several months to build up the iron in your body.

You may need to get iron by an intravenous (IV) infusion given into your bloodstream if you have problems with the iron supplement pills. Iron infusions are done at clinics at a hospital or in the community.



If your anemia is severe, your healthcare provider may recommend a [blood transfusion](#).

Asking the following questions can help you make an informed decision about your different treatment options and decide what will work best for you:

“What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?”

“Can I use any of these options together?”

“How will this make me feel? Will it have side effects?”

“What results can I expect?”





Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral

Depending on your health status and the underlying cause of your iron deficiency anemia, you may be referred to a specialist. Examples include:

Gastroenterologist: specializes in the digestive system (gastrointestinal tract). They diagnose and treat problems involving the esophagus, stomach, small and large intestines, liver, gallbladder, and pancreas.

Hematologist: specializes in blood and blood-related disorders. They diagnose and treat problems involving the red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, and bone marrow.

Gynecologist: specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the vulva, vagina, uterus, and ovaries.

General Internal Medicine: specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of medical conditions.

Your specialist will meet with you to discuss your health concerns and look at your test results. The specialist may diagnose your concern, order more tests, or discuss treatment and management options with you.

You can find out more about the referral criteria for a specialist by asking your healthcare provider.



Helpful tools and resources

The QuRE program has a number of tools to help you get ready for a referral. You can download:

- A [checklist of questions](#) to ask your primary healthcare provider about the referral.
- A [journal](#) to prepare for your specialist appointment.
- A [tool](#) to use during your specialist appointment.





Start your treatment and watch your symptoms

As you try the treatment options you chose, remember that if something doesn't work the way you thought it would, or there are side effects you are struggling with, connect with your healthcare provider to find a treatment that will work for you.



Treating Iron Deficiency Anemia

Iron Supplement Pills

Take iron supplement pills for as long as your healthcare provider tells you to. A pharmacist is a great resource for information on the different types of iron supplement pills and how to take them. You may feel better after a few weeks of taking iron supplement pills. But don't stop taking the pills. You'll need to keep taking them for several months to build up your iron stores.

Tips for taking iron supplement pills

- If you miss taking your iron, do not take a double dose.
- Vitamin C may help your body absorb the iron. You can try taking your pill with a glass of orange juice or another food or drink that has vitamin C.
- If you are unable to take a pill, you can try liquid iron. Liquid iron can stain your teeth so it may help to mix the iron with water or juice and drink through a straw.
- Take iron on an empty stomach, if you can. Iron is absorbed best if you take it on an empty stomach. But in some people, iron supplements can cause problems such as stomach discomfort and constipation. If you're having stomach problems, you may need to take the pills with food
- If your iron supplement pills make you feel too sick, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. There may be another type of iron supplement pill you can take.
- Don't take your iron supplement pills within 2 hours of taking antacids or tetracycline.
- Do not take iron supplement pills with any of the below, as they won't work as well:
 - Tea, coffee, chocolate, or other food or beverages high in caffeine.
 - Milk and other calcium-rich foods or supplements.
 - High-fibre foods, such as bran, whole grains, nuts, and raw green vegetables.



Generative AI (Copilot Chat) was used to create and edit this image.



Common side effects

Many people have some side effects (usually mild) when they first start iron supplement pills. These side effects often improve over time. When you use iron supplement pills, you may notice:

- Upset stomach or nausea
- Stomach cramps or discomfort
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Dark or black-coloured stools (this is common and not harmful)
- Metal-like taste in your mouth

If your side effects are mild, keep taking the iron and let your healthcare provider know at your next visit.

Tips to reduce side effects

- Taking iron with food may help stomach upset (even though iron absorbs best on an empty stomach).
- Drinking plenty of fluids and eating food high in fiber can help prevent constipation. Avoid eating high fiber foods when taking the iron pill, instead, space the fiber out during other meal and snack times.
- If one type of iron bothers you, another type or dose may work better. Speak to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- If you are taking iron supplement pills daily, ask your doctor if you can switch to taking the medication every 2 days.

Caution:

- Keep iron supplement pills out of the reach of children. Iron poisoning can be very dangerous.
- Do not stop taking iron without talking to your healthcare providers.
- Do not take more iron than prescribed.

When to call your healthcare provider

- Side effects are severe or not improving.
- You have ongoing vomiting.
- Constipation becomes painful or severe.
- You cannot tolerate the iron at all.
- You are unsure how or when to take the iron.

Your healthcare provider may adjust the dose, change the type of iron, or suggest another treatment option.

What to expect

- You may start to feel better in a few weeks.
- Iron usually needs to be taken for at least 6 months after iron stores are back to normal. Some patients may require iron for many years.
- Follow-up blood tests may be done to check your progress.

Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusions

- IV iron infusions may take up to 2 hours or more depending on the type of IV iron.
- During the infusion, if you feel any irritation or if you see a discoloration of the skin around the IV site, notify the healthcare provider administering the infusion immediately.
- You will need to be monitored for a period of time after the infusion.
- Some types of iron are not provided by the clinics and you will have to get them from your pharmacy ahead of time.
- Where you get your infusion will depend why you need the IV iron. Infusions may be done at a healthcare facility or private clinic.
- Your healthcare provider may ask you to also take some oral iron supplement pills even when you are getting IV iron.

There may be a cost for certain forms of IV iron and at private clinics. The cost may be covered by your private drug plan.

Monitoring your symptoms

Watching your symptoms is important. Call your healthcare provider or Health Link at 811 if you have any concerns. You might feel like you don't want to bother your healthcare team, but no detail is too small to share. If it matters to you, it will matter to your healthcare team.

You can clarify with your healthcare team what to expect in terms of follow-up communication. Connect with your healthcare team whenever you:

- have questions
- notice your symptoms getting worse
- have problems with your medicine
- haven't gotten test results or heard back about an appointment in the time you had agreed to

If you notice any of the following, go to the emergency department or call 911:

- heavy bleeding (bleeding that is flowing or continuous) from your rectum (bum), vagina, or nose
- severe chest pain that starts suddenly
- fainting
- rapid, shallow breathing
- weak or fast pulse
- confusion or severe, unexplained fatigue

Call Health Link at 811 or call your healthcare provider if you notice any of the following:

- soaking a high-protection product like a pad, tampon, or menstrual cup every hour for more than 2 hours
- passing large clots (larger than a loonie)
- feeling dizzy, weak, feverish, or having severe abdominal pain
- signs of infection such as a fever or feeling generally unwell



Helpful tools and resources

If you can't reach your healthcare provider and need health advice or information, call Health Link at 811 anytime for health advice and information. You can also chat online or request a callback at www.primarycarealberta.ca/811.





Keep taking care of yourself

There are many different things that can impact your health and wellness. It is important to be able to work with your healthcare team to decide what is best for you, in your life, given your own unique symptoms and circumstances.

Continue to advocate for your whole-person health at each appointment. Trust yourself and your experience, and track your symptoms. Ask direct questions and statements like:

- “These symptoms are affecting the quality of my life.”
- “I would like to talk about other treatment options”
- “This medicine is making me feel horrible, what can I do to feel better?”

You can help prevent iron deficiency anemia by eating iron-rich foods every day. These include meats, vegetables, and whole grains. See [Getting Enough Iron](#) for more information.



Helpful tools and resources

Find programs and resources in your community:

211 connects Albertans to the programs and resources they need, anytime, day or night. Whether you're looking for help with mental health, financial assistance, basic needs or other challenges, 211 is here to help you find supports. It's free, confidential, and available in over 170 languages by phone, making it easy to access help when you need it. To connect with **211 Alberta**:

- Call 211
- Text INFO to 211
- Chat or search at ab.211.ca

The **Alberta Healthy Living Program** offers free workshops, classes, and supervised exercise and nutrition services to adults living with a variety of chronic conditions and diseases. Many education classes and workshops are available province wide. Learn more by visiting ahs.ca/ahlp.

Chronic Disease Management support:

www.primarycarealberta.ca/chronicdisease

Health Information & Tools: myhealth.alberta.ca/Pages/HealthInfoToolsDefault.aspx



Resources

There's lots of information out there, and it can be confusing to know what information is accurate and true. Here are some great resources that may be helpful for you.

Iron Deficiency Anemia Resources:

- MyHealthAlberta – myhealth.alberta.ca, search “[Iron Deficiency Anemia](#)” and “[Getting Enough Iron](#)”
- Alberta Health Services:
 - [Iron and Your Health](#)
 - [Healthy Vegetarian Eating](#)

Helpful tip

If you can't print this resource at home, ask a family member, friend, or your healthcare provider to print it for you. You can also use a computer and printer at your local library.

Get help now:

- **Emergency: Call 911**
- Health Link: Call 811

Mental health, addiction, and crisis support:

- 811 or [Addiction Helpline](#): 1-866-332-2322
- 811 or [Mental Health Helpline](#): 1-877-303-2642
- Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 988 visit 988.ca

Community and social supports:

- 211 Alberta: Call 211, or visit ab.211.ca
- Family Violence Info Line: 310-1818, or visit alberta.ca/family-violence-find-supports
- Income Support: 1-866-644-5135, or visit alberta.ca/income-support

Alberta Health Services programs:

- Home Care: ahs.ca/homecare
- Find a Dietitian: ahs.ca/nutrition
 - Health Link has dietitians to answer nutrition questions. Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete the self-referral form on primarycarealberta.ca/811.
- Spiritual Care Services: ahs.ca/spiritualcare
- Support to quit smoking: albertaquits.ca

Primary care (family doctors and nurse practitioners):

- Find a doctor or nurse practitioner: <https://albertafindaprovider.ca/>
- Virtual care guide: ahs.ca/virtualhealth

Patient concerns and feedback:

- Office of Alberta Health/Mental Health Patient Advocates: alberta.ca/office-of-alberta-health-advocates
 - Offers coaching to help you advocate for yourself in the health system, and support to learn how the health system works and how to navigate through it.
- Alberta Health Services Patient Relations: 1-855-550-2555, or visit ahs.ca/patientfeedback

Important phone numbers

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Name or clinic name:

Phone number:

Notes

Use this space to take notes.

About this Pathway

The Provincial Pathways Unit co-developed this patient pathway in partnership with patient and family advisors, primary and specialty care providers in Alberta. It is current as of June 2026.

Authors & Conflict of Interest Declaration

This pathway was reviewed and revised by a multi-disciplinary co-design team including specialists and primary care providers from across Alberta. Membership available on request by emailing albertapathways@primarycarealberta.ca.

Pathway Review Process

Patient pathways undergo scheduled review every three years, or earlier if there is a clinically significant change in knowledge or practice. The next scheduled review is June 2029. However, we welcome feedback at any time. Please send us your [feedback here](#).

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Disclaimer

This pathway represents evidence-based best practice but does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to their patients using their own clinical judgment given their patients' specific clinical conditions, in consultation with patients/alternate decision makers. The pathway is not a substitute for clinical judgment or advice of a qualified healthcare professional. It is expected that all users will seek advice of other appropriately qualified and regulated healthcare providers with any issues transcending their specific knowledge, scope of regulated practice, or professional competence.