**PREVENTING AND CURING ANEMIA**

**WHAT IS ANEMIA?**

A person with anemia has “thin blood”. This happens when blood is lost or destroyed faster than then body can replace it. Dysentery, large wounds, bleeding ulcers, malaria, and heavy menstrual cycles can all lead to anemia. Not eating enough of the mineral IRON in foods can cause anemia or make it worse, especially for children and pregnant women.

**WHO DEVELOPS ANEMIA?**

Anyone can have anemia, but children, pregnant women, and women with heavy menstrual cycles are especially at risk. Pregnant women with anemia are more at risk of miscarriage and dangerous bleeding in childbirth. In children, severe anemia can be caused by hookworm infections, chronic diarrhea, and dysentery in addition to the lack of iron-rich foods in their diet. It is very important that young children and pregnant mothers eat as much of the foods high in iron as possible.

**WHAT ARE SIGNS OF ANEMIA?**

Common symptoms of anemia are: weakness and fatigue, pale gums and skin, white fingernails.

In severe cases, women and children like to eat dirt. In addition, their face and feet may be swollen, their heartbeat rapid, and they are short of breath.

**HOW DO YOU PREVENT AND TREAT ANEMIA?**

Eat foods that are rich in the mineral IRON.

SEE THE CHART: **PARA PREVENIR LA ANEMIA, COMA ALIMENTOS RICOS EN HIERRO.**

Below are special notes on each topic on the chart:

* **PROTEIN FOODS** – Red meats and liver are especially high in iron. ALL animal foods have a form of iron that is better absorbed by the body. Frijoles and lentejas are also protein foods, but they have another type of iron that is not as easy for the body to absorb.
* **VEGETABLES AND FRUITS** - Dark green leafy vegetables, peas, and (dried) fruits have more iron than other vegetable and fruits. Raw vegetables will have more Vitamin C (see below).
* **BREADS AND CEREALS** – Choose enriched breads, rice, and cereals, which have iron added to them when they are made.
* **HOW TO HELP YOUR BODY TO USE IRON BETTER**
* Eat foods with Vitamin C (citrus fruits, tomatoes, berries) when you eat animal foods (meats, liver, chicken, eggs, tuna).
* Cook in iron pots and pans. Or, place a clean piece of iron or horseshoe in the cooking pot. Any food that you cook like this will have more iron.
* **WHAT DOES NOT HELP**
* Avoid drinking coffee and tea in along with a meal that has iron-rich foods. Coffee and tea can limit how much iron your body absorbs.

**NOTE:** Person with moderate or severe anemia should see their medical doctor regarding iron (ferrous sulfate) pills. This especially important for pregnant mothers with anemia.