Anemia
Patient Education

What is Anemia?
Anemia is a decrease in the number of red blood cells in the blood or a decrease in hemoglobin (the part of the red blood cell which carries oxygen).

What causes it?
Anemia may be caused by a large amount of blood loss, destruction of the red blood cells from cancer or other blood diseases, a decrease in the growth of cells in the bone marrow (from chemotherapy or radiation therapy), or lack of iron/vitamins in your diet.

Symptoms
- Pale skin.
- Weakness, tiredness, drowsy, or dizzy.
- Headache, ringing in your ears.
- Trouble breathing or catching your breath especially with movement.
- You may feel “racing heartbeats”, or chest pain (These are danger signals. Call your doctor immediately for racing heartbeat or chest pain).

Treatment
- You may need to be given red blood cells into your vein (transfusion).
- Medication may be used to stimulate your bones to make more red blood cells.
- Your doctor will talk to you about what treatment you should receive.

Suggestions:
- Get up slowly from a lying or sitting position.
- Do not drive or operate machinery if you feel faint.
- Pace your activities with frequent rest periods.
- Eat a balanced diet with increased protein and calories.
- If you notice any new bleeding (black-colored stool, mouth/gum bleeding, blood in urine) or bruising, let your doctor or nurse know right away!
- Ask your nurse for the “fatigue” sheet for more ideas.