

# Top health tips that hematologists want patients to know



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Blood and its disorders play huge roles in people's quality and length of life. It pays, then, to know the basics about some common blood-related conditions that are on the minds of hematologists.

Here is a list from the AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know™ series—which provides physicians with a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines—on some important health tips that hematologists want their patients to know.

## **1 Get to know the symptoms of iron deficiency and tips for addressing it**

Do you find yourself consistently fatigued despite getting sufficient sleep each night? If you are also dealing with symptoms such as dizziness, lightheadedness or brittle nails, it is possible that you are lacking iron. An essential nutrient, iron is crucial for the formation of hemoglobin, which is a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. It is also involved in other important processes, such as energy production and the proper functioning of the immune system.

Yet while iron is naturally found in certain foods, many people fall short of meeting their recommended intake. This can lead to iron deficiency, which

affects about 10 million people in the U.S., 5 million of whom have iron deficiency anemia. Two physicians took time to discuss what patients need to know about iron deficiency.

## **2 Understand the sources of microplastics and how to reduce your exposure**

In the unseen corners of our daily lives, tiny particles are quietly accumulating and finding their way into the food we eat, the water we drink and even the air we breathe. These minuscule invaders, known as microplastics, have become an inescapable part of our environment. And understanding the implications of these microscopic fragments is becoming increasingly important.

A hematologist and medical oncologist at the Henry Ford Cancer Institute, in Detroit, summarized what patients need to know about microplastics. [Henry Ford Health](#) is a member of the [AMA Health System Program](#), which provides enterprise solutions to equip leadership, physicians and care teams with resources to help drive the future of medicine.

## **3 Learn how to manage sickle cell disease and read about its one cure**

Sickle cell disease—the most common type is known as sickle cell anemia—is a genetic blood disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. With its roots deeply embedded in the molecular structure of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen, sickle cell disease causes the cells to assume a rigid, sickle-like shape, leading to a cascade of complications. From debilitating pain crises to organ damage and heightened susceptibility to infections, sickle cell anemia takes a toll on patients' health and well-being.

Two AMA members—including a pediatric hematologist and oncologist at [Sanford Health](#), in Fargo, North Dakota, which is also a member of the AMA

Health System Program—outlined what patients need to know about sickle cell disease.

#### **4 Take action on prostate cancer to boost your outcomes**

Awareness of prostate cancer has grown recently with several high-profile diagnoses, including that of Chicago Cubs Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg, as well as Dexter Scott King—the youngest son of Martin Luther King Jr.—who died of the disease. Nevertheless, it is still the tendency of many men to ignore their prostate issues.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men—with about one in eight being diagnosed during their lifetime—and the second-leading cause of cancer death among men in the U.S. About 60% of diagnoses are in men 65 or older, according to the American Cancer Society. That organization's chief scientific officer laid out what patients need to know about prostate cancer.

#### **5 Adopt these 14 recommendations if you are immunocompromised**

While public health officials have declared an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of the disease remains elevated for millions of Americans with compromised immune systems. That's because patients who are immunocompromised are still at higher risk for severe infection from SARS-CoV-2.

For too many of these patients, it can feel as though the date on the calendar hasn't budged much from March 2020. Three AMA members shared what patients should know about being immunocompromised.

When it comes to effective doctor-patient communication, it's important that both parties are speaking from a base of shared knowledge. The AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know series explores dozens of health topics, including [getting flu vaccines](#), [preventing](#)



falls and using AI for health tips.