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Home Hypoxemia (low blood oxygen) Basics Definition

# Hypoxemia (low blood oxygen)

Basics

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Definition

Causes

When to see a doctor

## Definition

By Mayo Clinic staff

Your cells need a constant supply of oxygen to function normally. When this supply is reduced or interrupted, you can develop hypoxemia, a low level of oxygen in your blood. Hypoxemia can disrupt your body's functioning and harm vital tissues. In severe cases, it's life-threatening.

The main symptom of hypoxemia is shortness of breath, but depending on how quickly hypoxemia develops, you may experience a reduced capacity for exercise, fatigue and confusion.

Blood oxygen is measured by an arterial blood test or by an oximeter, a small device that's clipped onto your finger. Normal blood oxygen readings range from 95 to 100 percent at sea level. Values under 90 are considered low. Severe hypoxemia occurs when oxygen saturation drops

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