



# ... just the FACTS

**Study summaries examining the latest science on beef's place in a healthy diet**

## **STUDY INDICATES IRON DEFICIENCY AFFECTS HALF OF PREGNACIES IN ONTARIO, AND MANY WOMEN ARE NOT SCREENED**

### **STUDY DESIGN:**

A retrospective cohort study of pregnant patients who underwent prenatal testing at community laboratories in Ontario was used to determine the prevalence of ferritin testing and iron deficiency.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Determine the prevalence of ferritin testing during pregnancy.
2. Determine the prevalence and severity of iron deficiency.
3. Identify clinical and demographic factors that influence likelihood of iron deficiency screening.

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

This study included data from 44,552 patients identified as pregnant through testing at labs in Ontario.

### **METHODS:**

The prevalence of ferritin testing in pregnant patients was determined using anonymized data from a large outpatient laboratory in Ontario.

Ferritin levels were used to determine the prevalence and severity of iron deficiency among women who were screened.

### **RESULTS:**

- Only 59.4% of patients had their ferritin levels checked during pregnancy.
- Half (52.8%) of pregnant women given a ferritin test were iron deficient, and nearly one quarter (23.8%) were severely iron deficient.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

1. **One in two women who were tested in Ontario labs were iron deficient during their pregnancy.**
2. **Severe iron deficiency was prevalent, affecting nearly one in four of the women who were tested.**
3. **40% of women did not receive a ferritin test to screen for iron deficiency during pregnancy.**

### **FOR YOUR PRACTICE:**

**Women need even more iron during pregnancy to meet the needs for healthy fetal development. Iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy is associated with poor maternal and child health outcomes. The findings from this study suggest that iron deficiency is prevalent during pregnancy and screening should be included as part of routine prenatal bloodwork in Canada.**

Teichman J, Nisenbaum R, Lausman A, and Sholzberg M. Suboptimal iron deficiency screening in pregnancy and the impact of socioeconomic status in a high-resource setting. *Blood Adv* 2021;5(22):4666-4673.