

# Iron In Your Diet

## Forms of Dietary Iron

- **Heme iron** comes from animal sources such as beef, pork, lamb, fish, chicken and turkey. Your body absorbs heme iron better than non-heme iron.
- **Non-heme** iron is found in fortified grain products, beans, peas, eggs, and some fruits and vegetables. Your body does not absorb non-heme iron as well.

## To Increase Iron Intake & Absorption

- Enjoy many iron-rich foods.
- Eat at least one iron-rich food at each meal.
- Check the nutrition label on breakfast cereals. Look for at least 30% of the Recommended Daily Value for iron.
- Add beans to soups, stews or casseroles.
- Have pasta with tomato sauce instead of cream sauce.
- Add dried fruit to cereal or your favorite baked good recipe.
- Combine vitamin C-rich foods with iron-rich foods. Vitamin C helps your body absorb iron. This is very important for vegetarians.
- Use a cast iron skillet for cooking.
- Add blackstrap molasses to baked goods.

Avoid large amounts of calcium, coffee and tea with meals. These may decrease the amount of iron your body absorbs.

## Food Sources of Vitamin C

Vitamin C foods help your body absorb iron if eaten at the same time as iron-rich foods.

- Orange
- Kiwi
- Tomato juice
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- Grapefruit
- Pineapple
- Mango
- Papaya
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Tomato
- Bell pepper
- Peapods
- Cauliflower
- Potato

Foods with Heme Iron	mg of Iron
Oysters, 3 oz	4
Beef, 3 oz.	2
Chicken, 3 oz	1
Egg, 1 large	1
Pork or ham, 3 oz.	1
Tuna, 3 oz.	1
Salmon, 3 oz	1

<b>Foods with Non-heme Iron</b>	<b>Mg Iron</b>
Fortified breakfast cereal, 1 oz.	5-18
Instant oatmeal, 1 packet	4
Lentils, cooked, ½ cup	3
Spinach, cooked, ½ cup	3
Beans (kidney, black, pinto, lima, white, garbanzo), ½ cup	2
Tofu, ½ cup	2
Edamame, ½ cup	2
Sunflower seeds, ¼ cup	2
Prune juice, ½ cup	2
Enriched bread, 1 slice	1
Enriched pasta, cooked, ½ cup	1
Enriched rice, cooked, ½ cup	1
Medium baked potato w/ skin	1
Green peas, cooked, ½ cup	1
Almonds or cashews, 1 oz.	1
Raisins, 1 oz.	0.5
Dried apricots, 5 halves	0.5

*You may be at risk for iron deficiency if you are vegan, vegetarian, have an eating disorder, and/or have gastrointestinal disease (Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, celiac disease).*

*If you suspect you may have iron deficiency or anemia, please make an appointment with a Primary Care Provider to discuss having lab work done.*