

A Guide to High-Iron Foods

Iron is a mineral necessary for healthy blood and muscles. Iron needs depend on several factors including age, sex and the amount of iron stored in the body. It is important to eat several iron-rich foods as part of a balanced diet each day. Iron in foods of animal origin is absorbed more efficiently than iron in foods of plant origin. Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron. It is particularly beneficial to consume vitamin C with iron-containing plant foods.

Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for iron:

	Age	Iron needs in milligrams (mg) per day
Females	9 to 13 years	8
	14 to 18 years	15
	19 to 50 years	18
	51+ years	8
	Pregnancy	27
	Lactation	9
Males	9 to 13 years	8
	14 to 18 years	11
	19+	8

Iron content of animal foods:

Food	Amount	Iron in mg
Beef, rib (lean)	3 ounces	2.2
Beef, corned	3 ounces	1.8
Beef, dried	3 ounces	3.8
Chicken (roasted)	3 ounces	1.0
Clams	3 ounces	24.0
Egg	1 large	1.0
Ham (roasted)	3 ounces	1.2
Hamburger	3 ounces	2.1
Liver, beef	3 ounces	5.3
Liver, chicken	3 ounces	7.2
Liver, lamb	3 ounces	15.2
Liver, pork	3 ounces	15.2
Oysters	3 ounces	11.4
Pork chop (lean)	3 ounces	1.0
Sardines (canned)	3 ounces	2.5
Sausage, liver	3 ounces	5.4
Shrimp	3 ounces	2.6
Turkey (roasted)	3 ounces	1.1
Veal (roasted)	3 ounces	2.8

Iron content of plant foods:

Food	Amount	Iron in mg
Apricots (dried)	1/2 cup	2.1
Beans, lima	1/2 cup	2.1
Beans, navy (dried)	1/2 cup	2.6
Dates (dried)	10	1.0
Lentils (cooked)	1/2 cup	2.1
Molasses, blackstrap	1 tablespoon	3.2
Mustard greens (boiled)	1 cup	1.0
Peaches (dried)	1/2 cup	1.7
Prunes (dried)	1/2 cup	2.0
Prune juice	1 cup	3.0
Raisins	1/2 cup	1.5
Soybeans	1/2 cup	4.4
Spinach (boiled)	1 cup	6.4
Swiss chard (boiled)	1 cup	4.0
Tofu	3 ounces	1.6

Iron-fortified cereals:

Food	Amount	Iron in mg
Product 19®	1 cup	18
Frosted Mini-Wheats®	1 cup	15
Chex®	1 cup	9
Special K®	1 cup	8
Life®	3/4 cup	8
Grape-Nuts Flakes®	3/4 cup	8
Cream of Wheat® (cooked)	3/4 cup	8

Choose iron-fortified cereals that are not fortified with calcium.

If you are taking iron supplements, do not take them at the same time as calcium supplements. Calcium can bind with the iron and impair absorption.

Vitamin C in fruits and vegetables

Excellent sources—more than 35 mg. per three-ounce serving.

- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Cantaloupe
- Grapefruit
- Grapefruit juice
- Kiwi fruit
- Kohlrabi
- Mango
- Oranges
- Orange juice
- Papaya
- Green peppers
- Spinach
- Strawberries

Good sources—20 to 30 mg. per three-ounce serving.

- Asparagus
- Bean sprouts (raw)
- Chard
- Honeydew melon
- Potato
- Tangerine
- Tomatoes
- Tomato juice