



IRON

The Powerhouse Mineral

Iron is a powerhouse mineral. It can make a big difference in how well you work, play and learn.

Iron is a part of the hemoglobin molecule in your blood that carries oxygen to your body's cells. For example, your arm muscles need oxygen so you can swing a tennis racket...or your back and leg muscles can keep you standing upright! Iron in the hemoglobin molecule helps carry carbon dioxide back to the lungs for removal. Iron works in each cell to help produce energy. For example, your heart needs energy to serve as your body's pump!

"When your blood level of iron is low, your energy level seems low"

When your blood level of iron is low, your energy level seems low and you may feel tired or irritable. Children may not be able to concentrate and may have trouble learning. Although iron is widespread in the food supply, it can be challenging to get enough of this essential mineral. Even so, iron needs to be replaced daily through your diet.

How much iron do you need?

Check the box that lists your iron needs:

I need this much iron every day

Child, age 1 - 10.....	10 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male, age 11-18.....	12 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male, age 19-51+.....	10 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female, age 11-50.....	15 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female, age 50+.....	10 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female, pregnant.....	30 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female, breastfeeding.....	15 mg	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences National Research Council. Recommended Dietary Allowances, Revised 1980

To get the best value for the iron in your diet, here are some tips to help you:

IRON BOOSTERS

- Meat, fish and poultry contain heme iron. (Heme comes from the word hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying molecule). This form of iron is much better absorbed than the non-heme iron in plant foods.
- When you eat plant foods along with meat, fish or poultry, the non-heme iron in the plant foods is better absorbed. For example, the iron in a spinach salad will be much better absorbed if you eat meat, fish or poultry at the same meal. People who do not eat meat, fish or poultry will find it more difficult to meet their iron needs.
- Eat foods high in vitamin C to help absorb the non-heme iron in plant food. For example, drinking orange juice with a meal of iron-fortified breakfast cereal helps your body absorb the iron in the cereal. Examples of other high vitamin C foods are oranges, broccoli, tomatoes, kiwifruit, strawberries, peppers, potatoes and cabbage.

See "Pump Up Your Iron" on next page for a list of high iron foods to help you increase iron in your diet.

PUMP UP YOUR IRON

IRON BUSTERS

- Tea and coffee contain substances that interfere with iron absorption. Try to drink these beverages between meals.
- High fiber foods like bran reduce the absorption of iron.
- Some medications block the absorption of iron. These include antacids or phosphate salts like calcium phosphate. Ask your doctor or dietitian if there are other medications you are taking that might be interfering with iron absorption.

Place checkmark in box

Sources of heme iron (best absorbed form of iron)

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liver, 3 oz | 5.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sirloin, tenderloin or chuck pot roast, 3 oz | 3.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ground beef, 3 oz extra lean | 2.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna, light, 3 oz | 1.3 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken or turkey, 3 oz | 1.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flounder, sole, salmon, halibut, 3 oz | less than 1.0 mg |

Sources of non-heme iron (poorly absorbed form of iron)

See Iron Booster Tips for hints to improve iron absorption.

- Iron fortified cereals, per serving: ranges from 2-18 mg: * check the label of your favorite and fill in the blank _____

*(If the label shows 10% Daily Value for iron, this means that one serving contains 10% of the recommended level of 18 milligrams of iron in one serving. To calculate milligrams: 10% x 18 mg = 1.8 mg)

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cream of Wheat or Malt o Meal, 1 envelope | 5.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lentils, 1 cup | 6.5 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instant breakfast, 1 envelope | 4.5 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney beans, 1 cup canned | 3.2 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baked potato, including skin | 3.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Split pea or black bean soup, 1 cup | 2.5 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refried beans, 1/2 cup | 2.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta, 1 cup made with iron-enriched flour | 1.4 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rice, 1/2 cup, white, regular | 1.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bread, 1 slice, made with iron-enriched flour | 1.0 mg or less |

Combination foods, including heme and non-heme iron

(The meat, fish or poultry that are present in these examples of combination foods will significantly increase the absorption of iron from all the foods you eat with them).

- | | |
|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baked beans, 1 cup, canned with pork & tomato sauce | 8.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hamburger, fast food, 4 oz beef patty | 6.0 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chop suey, beef & pork, 1 cup | 4.8 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chili, bean and beef (1 cup) | 4.3 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna salad sandwich (1) | 2.8 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lasagna (2.5" x 2.5", made with meat) | 2.7 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lentil & ham soup (1 cup) | 2.7 mg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beans and beef tostada | 2.5 mg |

Write in the amount of iron you need each day (see previous page) _____mg

Place a check mark next to the high iron foods above that you enjoy eating.

List 3 high iron foods from the list below that you will eat to help meet your daily iron needs:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____