



Iron Deficiency

Iron is an essential mineral in the body with several functions: carries oxygen from the lungs to other parts of the body, helps muscles store and use oxygen, and aids enzymes in carrying out several body reactions. Without Iron, our body is unable to complete crucial processes and transport oxygen throughout the body.

Anemia is when your body does not produce enough red blood cells. Iron is a key factor in helping to build these red blood cells. When your body does not have a sufficient amount of iron, it can not make adequate amounts of red blood cells or red blood cells that are too small. This is called iron deficiency anemia, the most common form of anemia.

Causes of Iron Deficiency

- Lose more blood cells and iron than you can replace
- Lack of iron in diet
- Unable to absorb iron
- Iron loss due to bleeding
- Various diseases interfere with iron absorption

Increasing Iron

When iron deficiency is problematic in your life, adding the right foods to your diet is most often the best way to get the iron you need. There are two types of iron. *Heme* iron is found in animal meat and is most available for absorption. *Non-heme* iron is found in plant sources and is less available for absorption. Adding both sources of iron in your diet is key. If you need more iron, talk to your doctor about a supplement.

Iron Absorption Enhancers:

Meat, fish, poultry, fruit (grapes, strawberries, melons), vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, green and red peppers, potato, tomato), vitamin C or ascorbic acid

Iron Absorption Inhibitors:

Coffee, tea, vegetables (spinach, sweet potatoes), whole grains, bran, soy products, polyphenols, phytic acid, oxalate acid

Sources of Heme Iron:

- Oysters*
- Clams*
- Mussels*
- Turkey
- Beef
- Shrimp

Sources of Non-Heme Iron:

- Cooked Beans*
- Enriched Breakfast Cereals*
- Potatoes with skin
- Enriched Pasta
- (* Excellent sources of iron)

How Much Iron Do I Need Daily?

	Age		
	14-18	19-30	31-50
Male	11 mg	8 mg	8 mg
Female	15 mg	18 mg	18 mg

Symptoms of Iron Deficiency

Consulting your doctor is a great way to find out if you are iron deficient. There are also several symptoms that may be a sign you are anemic, including:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Pale skin
- Rapid heartbeat
- Brittle nails
- Cracked lips
- Shortness of breath during exercise
- Cold hands and feet

Sources of Iron

Oysters (3 oz)	10.2 mg
Animal Liver/Giblet (3.5)	5.2—9.9 mg
Dry Cereals (1/2 cup)	2-21 mg
Kidney Beans (1 cup)	5.2 mg
Mussels (3 oz)	5 mg
Navy/Lima Beans (1)	4.5 mg
Soy Beans (1/2 cup)	4.4 mg
Pumpkin/Squash Seeds	4.2 mg
Lentils (1/2 cup)	3.3 mg
Spinach (1/2 cup)	3.2 mg
Beef (3 oz)	2.8-3.2 mg
Turkey (3.5 oz)	1.5-2.5 mg
Shrimp (3 oz)	2.3 mg
Enriched Pasta (1 cup,	1.8 mg
Potato (1 medium)	1 mg