

# Iron Deficiency Anemia

Iron deficiency anemia is a common type of anemia and can be caused by either excessive blood loss or inadequate dietary iron intake or both. It can only be diagnosed by a specific blood test. Iron is necessary for the production of hemoglobin, the solid part of your red blood cells. If your body becomes low on iron, your system cannot make enough red blood cells and you become anemic. There can be other reasons for anemia, such as other dietary deficiencies or underlying disease. Your health care provider should evaluate possible factors as indicated on an individual basis.

The recommended allowance of iron for women is 18 mg of iron per day and 10 mg per day for men. After menopause (when menstruation ceases), a woman's need for extra iron no longer exists, and the recommended daily allowance becomes 10 mg per day.

## FOODS HIGH IN IRON CONTENT

Not many foods are rich in iron so you need to get iron from many sources daily. The best food sources of iron are meat, poultry, fish, and eggs. Green leafy vegetables, potatoes, dried fruits, enriched bread, and cereal products are the best plant sources. Milk and milk products are low in iron content. Iron rich foods tend to be colorful because iron salts are pigmented. Because research shows that absorption is affected by many factors in addition to daily intake, a balanced diet that also includes essential minerals, vitamins, and proteins is important.

## IRON SUPPLEMENTS

To correct iron deficiency anemia, you may need a combination of foods high in iron and iron supplements. If you need to take iron pills, it is important to take them as directed. A double dose will not correct the imbalance faster. You will also notice that when taking the pills your stools (bowel movements) will be darker. This is normal and not a cause for concern. Some people experience constipation, others a laxative effect when taking iron. If the iron is begun on a low dose and gradually increased, most people adjust without problems. Supplemental iron is more efficiently absorbed when taken before or between meals, especially if taken with orange juice.

Once the anemia is corrected, you may be able to stop taking iron pills. However, some health care providers may suggest continuing with a one-a-day multiple vitamin with iron. This should be done after your health care provider documents with a blood test that the anemia has been corrected. If your anemia does not respond to therapy, further evaluation may be indicated. Once the medicine is stopped, it is especially important to continue a diet with foods high in iron to prevent a recurrence.

**To schedule an appointment with your primary care provider at UHS: Call 275-2662.**

## LINKS YOU CAN USE:

Food and Nutrition Research Institute  
<http://www.fnri.dost.gov/ph/wp/idafacts.htm>

MEDLINE Plus  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000584.htm>

Foods Containing Iron		Foods Containing Iron	
Food Item (serving size)	Iron Content (per serving)	Food Item (serving size)	Iron Content (per serving)
<b>Meats &amp; Proteins</b>		<b>Fruits &amp; Vegetables</b>	
Beef, cooked: 4 oz.	2.1 mg.	Raisins: 1 oz.	0.3 mg.
Steak: 3 oz.	2.6 mg.	Apricots, dried: ½ cup	3.0 mg.
Ham, lightly cured: 3 oz.	0.7 mg.	Strawberries, whole: 1 cup	0.6 mg.
Lamb, chop: 3oz.	1.7 mg.	Watermelon, diced: 1 cup	0.3 mg.
Fish sandwich, w/cheese: 1	1.8 mg.	Apple juice: 1 cup	1.9 mg.
Pork shoulder, cooked: 3 oz.	1.3 mg.	Prune juice: 1 cup	3.0 mg.
Bacon: 3 slices	0.3 mg.	Tomato juice: 1 cup	1.4 mg.
Scallops: 6	2.0 mg.	Greens, dandelions: 1 cup	1.9 mg.
Shrimp, fried: 3oz.	1.4 mg.	Beets, cooked: ½ cup	1.5 mg.
Veal, cutlet: 3 oz.	0.8 mg.	Kale, leaves only, cooked: 1 cup	1.2 mg.
Beans, dry, cooked	2.45 mg.	Spinach Raw, chopped: 1 cup	1.5 mg.
Black beans: ½ cup	2.5 mg.	Cooked: 1 cup	6.4 mg.
Pork & beans: ½ cup	2.45 mg.		
Chick peas: ½ cup			
Tofu, soybean curd, 2 ½": 1 piece	1.9 mg.	Turnip, cooked: 1 cup	0.3 mg.
Chili con Carne, w/ beans: 1 cup	4.3 mg.	Greens: 1 cup	1.3 mg.
Pizza, cheese: 1 slice	1.6 mg.	Peas, frozen, cooked: 1 cup	2.5 mg.
Chicken, cooked chicken roll: 2 slices	0.6 mg.	<b>Grains</b> (See next page.)	
Breast: 3 oz.	0.9 mg.		
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Tuna, solid & liquid In Oil: 3 oz. In water: 3 oz. Tuna Salad: 1 cup	1.6 mg. 0.6 mg. 2.5 mg.	Ready-to-eat cereal, iron fortified: N/A	Depends
Turkey, no skin, light & dark meat: 3 oz.	1.4 mg.	Instant oatmeal, packet: 1	6.7 mg.
Nuts, cashew: 1 oz.	1.7 mg.	Cream of Wheat, fortified: 1 cup	10.7 mg.
Egg, medium: 2	1.4 mg.	Raisin Bran: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup	3.5 mg.
Peanuts: 1 oz.	0.5 mg.	Bread, enriched: 1 slice	0.9 mg.
Peanut butter: 1 Tbsp.	0.3 mg.	Noodles, enriched, cooked: 1 cup	2.6 mg.
Mixed nuts, dry roasted: 1 oz.	1.0 mg.	Corn chips: 1 oz.	2.2 mg.
<b>Sweets</b>		Tortilla: 1	2.2mg.
Corn syrup: 2 Tbsp.	Trace		
Molasses, blackstrap: 2 Tbsp.	10.1 mg.		