

Food Sources of Iron

Information about Iron

- | Iron is a mineral that is important for good health.
- | Iron carries oxygen to all parts of your body.
- | Low iron levels can leave you tired, pale-looking and irritable.

How Much Iron Should I Aim For?

| <i>Age in years</i> | <i>Aim for an intake of* milligrams (mg)/day</i> | <i>Stay below* mg/day</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Men 19 and older | 8 | 45 |
| Women 19-50 | 18 | 45 |
| Women 51 and older | 8 | 45 |
| Pregnant women 19 and older | 27 | 45 |
| Breastfeeding women 19 and older | 9 | 45 |

*This includes sources of iron from food and supplements.

- | Vegetarians need almost twice the daily recommended amount of iron compared with non-vegetarians. Iron from plant-based foods is not absorbed as well by our bodies as animal food sources.

Iron Content of Some Common Foods

You can find iron in both animal and plant foods.

- | Animal sources (called "heme iron") include meat, fish and poultry. Our bodies easily absorb this type of iron.
- | Plant sources (called "non-heme iron") include dried beans, peas and lentils and some fruits and vegetables.
- | In Canada, grain products like flour, pasta and breakfast cereals

are fortified with iron. Our bodies better absorb this type of iron when taken along with meat/chicken/fish or a source of vitamin C. Vitamin C rich foods include citrus fruits and juices, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers.

The following table will show you which foods are sources of iron.

| <i>Food</i> | <i>Serving Size</i> | <i>Iron (mg)</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| <i>Vegetables and Fruit</i> | | |
| Spinach, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 2-3.4 |
| Tomato puree | 125 mL (½ cup) | 2.4 |
| Edamame/baby soybeans, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.9-2.4 |
| Lima beans, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 2.2 |
| Asparagus, raw | 6 spears | 2.1 |
| Hearts of palm, canned | 125 mL (½ cup) | 2.0 |
| Potato, with skin, cooked | 1 medium | 1.3-1.9 |
| Snow peas, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.7 |
| Turnip or beet greens, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.5-1.7 |
| Prune juice | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.6 |
| Apricots, dried | 60 mL (¼ cup) | 1.6 |
| Beets, canned | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.6 |
| Kale, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.3 |
| Green peas, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.3 |

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved.
May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Tomato sauce | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.3 |
| <i>Grain Products</i> | | |
| Oatmeal, instant, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 4.5-6.6 |
| Cream of wheat, all types, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 5.7-5.8 |
| Cereal, dry, all types | 30 g (check product label for serving size) | 4.0-4.3 |
| Granola bar, oat, fruits and nut | 1 bar (32 g) | 1.2-2.7 |
| Cracker, soda | 6 crackers | 1.5-2.3 |
| Oat bran cereal, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.0 |
| Pasta, egg noodles, enriched, cooked | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.3 |
| <i>Milk and Alternatives</i> | | |
| Yogurt, soy | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.0 |
| <i>Meat and Alternatives</i> | | |
| Meat and Poultry | | |
| Duck, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.8-7.4 |
| Moose or venison, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 2.5-3.8 |
| Beef, various cuts, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.4-3.3 |
| Ground meat (beef, lamb), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.3-2.2 |

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved.
May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

| | | |
|---|---------------|---------|
| Lamb, various cuts, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.3-2.1 |
| Chicken, various cuts, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 0.4-2.0 |
| Pork, various cuts, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 0.5-1.5 |
| Ground meat (turkey, chicken, pork), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 0.8-1.2 |
| Turkey, various cuts, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 0.3-0.8 |
| Organ Meats | | |
| Liver, pork, cooked* | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 13.4 |
| Liver (chicken, turkey, lamb) cooked* | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 6.2-9.7 |
| Kidney, lamb, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 9.3 |
| Liver, beef, cooked* | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 4.9 |
| Kidney (beef, veal, pork), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 2.3-4.4 |
| Fish and Seafood | | |
| Octopus, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 7.2 |
| Oysters, cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 3.3-9.0 |
| Seafood (shrimp, scallops, crab), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 2.2-2.3 |
| Sardines, canned | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.7-2.2 |
| Clams, canned | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 2.0 |
| Fish (mackerel, trout, bass), | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.4-1.7 |

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved.
May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

| | | |
|--|----------------|---------|
| cooked | | |
| Tuna, light, canned in water | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.2 |
| Meat Alternatives | | |
| Tofu, cooked | 150 g (¾ cup) | 2.4-8 |
| Soybeans, mature, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 6.5 |
| Lentils, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 4.1-4.9 |
| Beans (white, kidney, navy, pinto, black, roman/cranberry, adzuki), cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.6-4.9 |
| Pumpkin or squash seeds | 60 mL (¼ cup) | 1.4-4.7 |
| Peas (chickpeas/garbanzo beans, black-eyed, split), cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 1.9-3.5 |
| Tempeh/fermented soy product, cooked | 150 g (¾ cup) | 3.2 |
| Meatless (sausage, chicken, meatballs, fish sticks), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.5-2.8 |
| Baked beans, canned | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.2 |
| Nuts (cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia, pistachio nuts), without shell | 60 mL (¼ cup) | 1.3-2.2 |
| Egg, cooked | 2 large | 1.2-1.8 |
| Sesame seeds, roasted | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | 1.4 |
| Meatless, luncheon slices | 75 g (2 ½ oz) | 1.4 |

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved.
May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

| | | |
|--|----------------|-----|
| Hummus | 60 mL (¼ cup) | 1.4 |
| Almond butter | 30 mL (2 Tbsp) | 1.2 |
| <i>Miscellaneous</i> | | |
| Blackstrap molasses | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | 3.6 |
| Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite) | 30 mL (2 Tbsp) | 1.4 |

*Pregnant women should limit intake of liver to one serving every two weeks.

Source: Health Canada, "Canadian Nutrient File 2010" www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php
[Accessed March 20, 2012].



Notes

Distributed by: