

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

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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 |

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| 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> | | |
| <i>Meat and Poultry</i> | | |
| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| Humus | 60 mL (1/4 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

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