

# Iron Rich Diet



The University of Rochester Medical Center's commitment to help Rochester become America's healthiest community by 2020

## Purpose:

The high-iron diet prescribes foods high in iron in order to prevent iron deficiency anemia. You need iron in your body to carry oxygen in your blood.

## Uses:

Growing children, adolescents, some athletes and menstruating and pregnant women need more iron. Iron is also needed during illness or after surgery to help achieve a faster recovery.

## About Iron:

There are two types of iron in food—heme and nonheme iron.

Heme iron is found mainly in meat, poultry and fish. The darker the color, the higher the content of heme iron (dark chicken meat has more heme iron than light meat chicken meat). Heme iron is much more easily absorbed by the body than nonheme iron.

Nonheme iron is found in plant foods, such as breads and vegetables. Absorption of nonheme iron is enhanced when plant sources of iron are eaten with meats or foods containing vitamin C.

## Iron Absorption Enhancers:

- Meat, fish, poultry
- Fruits: orange, orange juice, cantaloupe, strawberries, grapefruit, and other vitamin C-containing foods
- Vegetables: broccoli, brussels sprouts, tomato, tomato juice, potatoes, green and red peppers, raw cabbage
- Others: white wine, foods containing cysteine

## RDA for Iron

### Children

1-3	15 mg/day
4-10	10 mg/day

### Females

11-50	18 mg/day
Over 50	10 mg/day
Breast feeding	18 mg/day
Pregnant	18+ mg/day

### Males

11-18	18 mg/day
Over 19	10 mg/day

## Excellent Source of Iron (3.5 mg or more)

### Heme Iron

Clams, oysters  
Liver, beef or chicken

## Good Sources of Iron (2.1 mg or more)

Beef, ground or steak, cooked  
Blood pudding  
Turkey, dark meat

## Sources of Iron (0.7 or more)

Chicken, ham, lamb, pork, veal  
Halibut, haddock, perch,  
salmon, canned or fresh  
Shrimp, canned salmon,  
sardines, tuna  
Egg

### Nonheme Iron

Cooked beans such as  
white beans, soybeans,  
lentils, chickpeas  
Breakfast cereals (enriched  
with iron)  
Tofu

Canned lima, red kidney beans,  
chickpeas, and split peas  
Cooked enriched egg noodles  
Dried apricots

Peanuts, pecans, walnuts,  
pistachios, roasted almonds,  
roasted cashews,  
sunflower seeds  
Cooked pasta, egg noodles  
Bread  
Pumpernickel bagel, bran muffin  
Cooked oatmeal  
Wheat germ  
Canned beets, drained  
Canned pumpkin  
Dried seedless raisins, peaches,  
prunes, apricots