

IRON

INFORMATION TO SUPPORT IRON INTAKE IN ADULTS

Recommended Dietary Iron Intake

Age (females)	Mg/day
19-50 years	18
Pregnant women 19-50	27
Lactating women 19-30	9

More iron is needed during pregnancy to support the rapid growth of the foetus and placenta. If women don't have enough iron during this time there is a higher risk of premature birth or low birth weight for the baby which can have a short or long term impact on the child's health.

Risk of iron deficiency

Symptoms of iron deficiency include: tiredness, lack of concentration, headache, pale skin, weakness or dizziness. Lack of iron can also increase the risk of infection. If you are concerned about your iron levels, see your GP for a consultation and blood test.

Increasing iron absorption

It is important to have vitamin C at the same time high iron foods are eaten, as this helps with iron absorption.



HOW TO GET YOUR VITAMIN C INTAKE:

- Foods like tomatoes, capsicum, broccoli, oranges and berries
- Avoid having tea, coffee or calcium rich foods right after having foods containing iron
- Ask your GP if any of your medications or herbal supplements can reduce iron absorption
- Iron supplements

There are two types of iron:

'Haem iron' is found in animal sources and is easily taken in (absorbed) by the body, such as lean meats and seafood

'Non-haem iron' is the iron that mainly comes from plant-based sources, such as legumes, vegetables, and fortified grain products. It is not absorbed by the body as easily as haem iron but it is still a very important source of iron.





Plant-Based Iron Sources



Animal-Based Iron Sources

Food	Amount	Iron Level	Source	Amount	Iron Level
Weet-Bix	30g	4mg	Chicken liver	100g	11mg
All Bran	20g	3mg	Beef	100g	3.2mg
Kidney beans	1 cup	3mg	Kangaroo	100g	3mg
Green lentils	1 cup	3mg	Lamb	100g	3mg
Tofu	100mg	3mg	Salmon	100g	1g
Chickpeas	1 cup	3mg	Tinned tuna	100g	1g
Cooked wholemeal pasta	140g (1 cup)	2mg	Lamb brains	100g	1g
Cashew nuts	30g (20)	2mg	Pork	100g	1g
Raw spinach	1 cup	1mg	Chicken	100g	0.5mg
Rolled oats	30g	1mg	Snapper	100g	0.3g

TIPS TO INCREASE IRON INTAKE

Breakfast ideas

- Have 2 pieces of iron fortified Weet-Bix
- Rolled oats with berries
- Wholegrain toast with peanut butter and a piece of fruit
- Wholegrain toast with eggs, tomato and spinach

Lunch ideas - try having a vitamin C rich piece of fruit with lunch too!

- Wholegrain sandwich or wrap with tuna and salad
- Four-bean mix salad with wholegrain roll or crackers
- Roasted vegetable, fresh tomato, nut and baby spinach salad

Dinner ideas

- Beef/lamb/kangaroo/pork steak with steamed vegetables
- Stir fry or curry containing chicken/pork/tofu/cashews/pine nuts / chickpeas, lentils and vegetables served with brown rice
- Mince with grated vegetables, pasta and tomato based sauce

Snack ideas

- Wholegrain crackers with hummus and tomato or chicken liver pate
- Small can of baked beans
- Roasted chickpeas (olive oil, paprika and cumin)