

Do you need iron?

Iron carries oxygen in your blood to all your body's cells so they can do their work.

If you do not have enough iron in your blood, you may:

- be more likely to get colds and the flu
- feel weak, tired and cranky
- have pale or dry skin
- be short of breath
- have loss of appetite

Children who don't get enough iron may also have trouble learning.

The best way to have enough iron in your blood is to eat foods that are high in iron.



Foods high in iron

Meat/alternatives

Beef
Lamb
Turkey
Tuna
Pork
Veal
Chicken
Fish
Shellfish
Tofu
Kidney beans
Dried beans/peas
Eggs
Peanut butter



Vegetables/fruits

Baked potato with skin
Dried apricots, peaches and prunes
Raisins
Green peas
Greens (collard, kale)
Broccoli

Grains

Whole-grain, iron-fortified cereals
WIC cereals
Infant cereal
Bran muffins
Whole-grain bread
Oatmeal
Rice
Enriched pasta
Flour tortillas
Pita bread
Wheat germ

How do you get enough iron from the foods you eat?

1. Enjoy eating a variety of vegetables, fruits and grains along with beef, pork, chicken, turkey and fish.

- The iron in beef, pork, chicken, turkey and fish is better used by your body.
- These meats also help the body use more iron from the vegetables, fruits and grains you eat.

2. Add foods high in vitamin C.

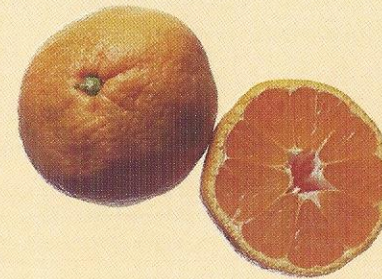
- Vitamin C helps your body use iron better.
- Eat foods that contain vitamin C with foods that are high in iron.

A note for people who don't eat meat:

Your body can get enough iron when you eat dried beans, fruits, vegetables and grains with foods high in vitamin C.

Foods high in vitamin C

Orange juice
Cantaloupe
Oranges
Grapefruit juice
Strawberries
Grapefruit
WIC juices
Green peppers
Raw cabbage
Cauliflower
Baked potato with skin
Broccoli
Tomatoes
Tomato juice



It is easy to combine foods high in iron and vitamin C:

- Peanut butter on whole-grain bread with orange juice
- Spaghetti with tomato sauce
- Iron-fortified cereal with strawberries
- Bean soup with coleslaw
- Black-eyed peas with greens
- Bean burrito with salsa and peppers

Cautions about iron supplements

- Not everyone needs extra iron. Check with a doctor, nurse or dietitian for your own needs or your child's needs.
- If you or your child need extra iron, follow your doctor's advice. Taking too much iron can make you or your child very sick.

Keep these and all medications out of reach of children.

Ways to stay healthy and have more energy:

Reminders about iron

Babies have special iron and food needs. Talk to your WIC health professional about how to feed your baby.

If you drink regular or decaffeinated coffee or tea with your meals, your body may not use iron as well. Instead, drink them between meals.

If you eat dirt, laundry starch or lots of ice, you may be low in iron. Check with your doctor, nurse or dietitian if you have these cravings.

