

IRON

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

HOW MUCH DOES THE BODY NEED A DAY?

The adult RDA (Recommended Dietary Allowance) for daily iron intake is 10 milligrams for men and 15 milligrams for women.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEFICIENCY?

Symptoms of iron deficiency are increased risk of infection, poor job performance, decreased gastric juice secretion, decreased growth rate, dizziness, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat and tingling in fingers and toes. Anemia is the "end stage" of severe iron deficiency. Signs of anemia include muscle weakness, fatigue, listlessness, a tendency to tire easily, and slow recovery from exertion and exercise.

WHO MAY BE DEFICIENT?

Anemia from lack of iron in the diet is the most prevalent nutritional-deficiency disease in the country. Iron deficiency is most common when iron needs greatly exceed normal intake, such as during infancy, preschool years, puberty, and during the child-bearing years for women (since iron is lost during the menstrual cycle). Pregnancy and disease also increase iron needs and therefore the risk of deficiency. Athletes incur a special type of anemia called runner's anemia. Three possible factors contribute to it: additional iron losses via increased perspiration, red blood cell destruction from trauma endured as red blood cells pass through the foot during exercise, and the increase in blood volume associated with athletic fitness.

WHAT FOODS ARE HIGH IN IRON?

Spinach 1/2 cup boiled = 2.5mg
Oysters 3oz cooked = 11.4mg
Sauerkraut 1/2 cup canned = 1.7mg
Green peas 1/2 cup boiled = 1.24mg
Liver (beef, chicken, calf) 3oz = 6.8mg
Braunschweiger sausage 1 slice = 1.68mg
Kidney/Lima/Navy beans 1 cup canned = 3.22mg
Steak/Pork/Lamb 3oz = 1-2mg
Prune juice 8oz = 3mg
Pot roast 3oz = 4.4mg
Apricots, dried 3 med = .6mg
Brewer's Yeast 1oz = 5mg
Cereals, fortified varies 2-8mg
Raisin 1/4 cup = .7mg

Sardines canned in oil 2 = .7mg
Tofu 1/2 cup raw = 6.65mg
Wheat germ toasted 1/4 cup = 2.6mg
Molasses 1T = 1-3mg
Cherries, canned 1/2 cup = 1.7mg

Iron found in non-meat sources is called nonheme iron and is easily destroyed in the intestine by food fibers, phosphates, proteins, acids, and tannins. However, consuming vitamin C rich foods with nonheme iron has been shown to increase the absorption of nonheme iron. The iron found in animal tissues is called heme iron and is not easily destroyed in the intestine, thereby making it a more absorbable source of iron.

FACTORS THAT MAY BOOST IRON ABSORPTION

- Vitamin C sources such as green/red peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, strawberries, oranges, tomatoes, asparagus, cantaloupe, grapefruit, mandarin oranges, cabbage, kale, papaya, and kiwi fruit.
- Eating a heme source of iron with a nonheme source (i.e. Chinese food)
- Oral contraceptives
- Factors that may block iron
- Tannins found in tea and red wine block iron absorption

DIETARY FIBER

- Wheat bran
- Phytic acid (found in grain fibers)
- High dose calcium supplements
- Drugs that may deplete iron
- Aspirin (long term use or overuse may cause iron-deficiency anemia)
- Indomethacin (anti-inflammatory agent)
- Cholestyramine (blood cholesterol lowering agent)
- Antacids (when taken with meals)
- EDTA (food additive and chemical commonly used in chelation therapy)
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Call the Wellness Center for more nutrition information at (618)536-4441.

Student Health Center



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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.