

Dietary Sources of Iron

Iron is involved in the transport of oxygen around the body via a protein called Haemoglobin. It also plays a role in several important enzyme reactions. Low Iron stores can leave you feeling tired and lethargic. Inadequate Iron can also affect growth in children and pregnant females as well as impact immune status.

In a nutshell what is involved?

Iron requirements are different for people at different stages of life. For example the requirements of a child compared to a pregnant female are very different. Choosing foods that are rich in Iron will help you to reach your recommended intake.

Recommended Daily Intakes

- Child 1-13yrs: Average 11mg/day
- Menstruating Female: 18mg/day
- Pregnant Female: 27mg/day
- Female 51-100yrs: 8mg/day
- Male: 19yrs +: 8mg/day



“Sometimes Iron rich foods might be abundant in your diet but you are having trouble absorbing Iron or a health conditions causes you to loose iron quickly. Your health practitioner can identify and work with these issues to optimise your Iron status”

Are animal products the only way I can get Iron in my diet?

No, Iron is found in a variety of vegetable and non-animal foods. The type of Iron found in non-animal products is not as easy to absorb as animal (haeme) based Iron. Your practitioner can help you to understand how you can optimise Iron absorption. For example they may recommend eating Vitamin C or citric acid rich foods when you eat vegetable based Iron which can help your body to absorb more.

Eating from vegetable or non-animal sources does not mean that you can't get adequate iron from a vegetarian diet. In fact per serving size many of the vegetable sources of Iron contain more Iron than animal sources.

Ensuring you eat from a wide variety of Iron rich foods, cooked in a variety of ways will help you to reach your Iron target.



<i>Dietary Sources of Iron</i>	<i>Serving Size</i>	<i>Amount of Iron</i>
PROTEINS (MEAT, FISH, POULTRY, LEGUMES)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tempeh ▪ Firm Tofu ▪ Beef, all cuts (cooked) ▪ Beef Liver (cooked) ▪ Kangaroo (cooked) ▪ Lamb all cuts (cooked) ▪ Chicken breast (cooked) ▪ Anchovy (canned in oil drained) ▪ Salmon (grilled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2.1-9.2mg ▪ 2.9mg ▪ 0.9gm-2.4gm ▪ 7.6gm ▪ 4.2mg ▪ 0.67mg-2.7mg ▪ 0.4mg-0.58mg ▪ 2.5mg ▪ 1.3mg
FRUIT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prunes ▪ Dates ▪ Apricot (dried) ▪ Apple (dried) ▪ Fig (dried) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50gm ▪ 50gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 0.6mg ▪ 1.3mg ▪ 3.1mg ▪ 1.1mg ▪ 1.4mg
VEGETABLES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bok Choy ▪ Kale ▪ Spinach ▪ Garlic ▪ Avocado raw ▪ Beetroot (raw or boiled) ▪ Broccoli raw ▪ Peas green raw ▪ Tomato Sundried ▪ Zucchini 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100gm ▪ 1 cup ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.46mg ▪ 2.5mg ▪ 3.5mg ▪ 2.7mg ▪ 0.6mg ▪ 0.84mg ▪ 0.86mg ▪ 1.78mg ▪ 5.6mg ▪ 0.58gm
NUTS, SEEDS, GRAINS, LEGUMES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muesli/ raw unfortified ▪ Broad Beans ▪ Lentils (cooked) ▪ Red Kidney Beans (cooked) ▪ Cashew Nuts ▪ Chickpeas (cooked) ▪ Sunflower seeds ▪ Almonds with skin ▪ Buckwheat ▪ Amaranth (uncooked) ▪ Quinoa (uncooked) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 50gm ▪ 100gm ▪ 25gms (tbs) ▪ 100gm ▪ 170gm (cup) ▪ 100gm ▪ 100gm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3.8mg ▪ 1.9mg ▪ 2mg ▪ 2.1mg ▪ 2.5mg ▪ 1.8mg ▪ 1.1mg ▪ 3.9mg ▪ 4.1mg ▪ 7.6mg ▪ 4.6mg
DAIRY ALTERNATIVES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Almond Milk ▪ Tahini 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100ml ▪ 2tbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 0.5mg ▪ 1.8mg
SEASONINGS AND CONDIMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marmite ▪ Curry Powder ▪ Cinnamon ▪ Parsley ▪ Dried Yeast Flakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1tsp ▪ 1tsp ▪ 1tsp ▪ 50gm (bunch) ▪ 100gm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.8mg ▪ 0.6mg ▪ 2mg ▪ 5.7mg ▪ 3.5mg



Vegetarian Iron Rich Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast: 50 grams of muesli with 100 mls of almond milk (breakfast provides approximately 4.4 mg of iron)

- Add dried fruit and nuts for Vitamin C and additional Iron. Chopped apricot/ figs/almonds

Snacks: Protein ball made with nuts, tahini, dates and sunflower seeds (2 balls would provide approximately 2.2 grams of iron)

Lunch: Falafel, tabouleh, hummus (tahini, chickpeas, garlic, lemon), wholemeal flatbread (lunch provides approximately 5.4 grams of iron)

- Add Avocado or homemade guacamole (hint of Lemon for Vitamin C/garlic for additional Iron)

Dinner: Tempeh curry (100 grams of tempeh) plus ½ cup of brown rice and a side serve of 1 cup of cooked kale (provides approximately 6.0 grams of iron).

- Add a variety of coloured vegetables for additional Iron and nutrients

Total iron = approximately 18 mg

References:

Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand: Iron

<https://www.nrv.gov.au/nutrients/iron>

FSANZ 2010. NUTTAB 2010 Online Searchable Database.

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/science/monitoringnutrients/nutrientables/nuttab/Pages/default.aspx>

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