

How Much Iron Do You Need?

- Birth–6 months: 0.27 mg
- 6 months–1 year: 11 mg
- 1– 3 years: 7 mg
- 4 –8 years: 10 mg
- 9–13 years: 8 mg
- 14–18 years:
 - Girls: 15 mg
 - Boys: 11 mg
 - Pregnant: 27 mg
 - Lactating: 10 mg
- 19–50 years:
 - Women: 18 mg
 - Men: 8 mg
 - Pregnant: 27 mg
 - Lactating: 9 mg

Best Iron Sources

Liver, beef, pork, shrimp, oysters, clams,
turkey/chicken (dark meat)

Good Iron Sources*

Iron-fortified cereals

Tofu/soybeans

Beans (black, kidney, pinto, lima, garbanzo,
lentils)

Enriched rice/pasta/bread/tortillas

Peas, nuts

Cooked leafy greens (spinach, kale, collard
greens, swiss chard)

Prune juice/dried fruits

Canned fish (tuna, sardines, salmon)

Eggs

* Fibers found in vegetable
sources may reduce iron
absorption

Why is **Vitamin C** important?

- Eating foods high in vitamin C helps your body absorb iron, especially iron from plant foods.
- Try eating high-iron plant foods with high-vitamin C foods at the same time.
- High-vitamin C foods:
Oranges, tangerines, papaya, kiwi, berries, watermelon, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower



Why is **Calcium** important?

- Calcium can decrease the amount of iron you absorb from high-iron foods.
- Toddlers who drink plenty of milk may prefer drinking milk to eating high-iron foods.
- Try to eat high-calcium foods and high-iron foods at different times (not in same meal).
- High-calcium foods:
Milk, yogurt, cheese, canned salmon/sardines, fortified tofu/soy, almonds



Iron Health for Women, Infants, and Children

Iron Facts, Foods, and How to Stay Iron Healthy!



Developed by Elizabeth Jimenez, UH Dietetic Intern (Cyndy Kahalewale, MPH, RDN, LD, Preceptor). Hawai'i Foods Website. Mav 2015

What Does Iron Do?

- Iron is in all cells in the body.
- It helps you grow physically
- ★ and mentally.
- It helps carry oxygen through the body.
- It gives you energy!
- It keeps you healthy by boosting your immune system



Symptoms of Iron Deficiency

- Tiredness/weakness
- More frequent sickness
- Paleness
- Poor appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Slow growth and development



Who Is at Risk?

- Infants
- Children
- Adolescents
- Women of childbearing age
- Pregnant women



Why Do Babies Need Iron?

- Babies and young children need a LOT of iron because they are growing so much.
- When babies are born, they have iron stores given from their mom. That storage of iron gets depleted around 6 months of age.
- Breast milk (and iron-fortified formula) provides some iron.
- When introducing new foods, make sure to include those high in iron.
- Premature and low-birthweight babies are at a higher risk for low iron because they do not have as much stored.



Why Do Toddlers Need Iron?

- Young children only get iron from food, and they are still growing a lot!
- Children age 1–3 tend to be picky eaters. They might not like high-iron foods.
- Too much of one food might replace high-iron foods.

Why Do Moms Need Iron?

- Moms need more iron during pregnancy so that they can pass it on to their baby.
- Moms have more blood during pregnancy. That means moms need more iron to carry oxygen through their body and to baby.
- If moms don't get enough iron during pregnancy, it can lead to early delivery and low birth weight and may make baby unhealthy.
- Babies absorb iron well from breast milk. They need a lot to build their iron stores.



Why Do Women Need Iron?

- Women of childbearing age are at risk for iron loss because of their monthly menstruation.
- They are losing iron, so they need more iron from their diet.
- Before and between pregnancies are important times to restore moms' iron, iron that was used up during pregnancies.