

There are two types of iron in the foods we eat. Heme iron is found in meat products and non-heme iron is found in vegetables and other foods. Heme iron is absorbed into the body better because other foods can affect how non-heme iron is processed.

Those foods that keep your body from absorbing non-heme iron include coffee and tea, high-fiber foods and soy products. It's a good idea to drink coffee and tea separately from meals that contain iron-rich foods.

Vitamin C increases absorption of non-heme iron but has little effect on heme iron. Eating foods that are high in Vitamin C along with those that are high in non-heme iron is a good plan.

The Institute of Medicine recommends the following amounts of iron each day depending on age and sex:

Infants and children

Under 6 months old = 0.27 milligrams (mg)

7 months - 1 year = 11 mg

1 - 3 years = 7 mg

4 - 8 years = 10 mg

Males

9 - 13 years = 8 mg

14 - 18 years = 11 mg

Age 19 and older = 8 mg

Females

9 - 13 years = 8 mg

14 - 18 years = 15 mg

19 - 50 years = 18 mg

51 and older = 8 mg

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding will need different amounts of iron. Check with your physician about this.

This is a list of some foods that are high in iron:

Food	Serving size	Iron in mg
Oysters	3 ounces	13.2
Beef liver	3 ounces	7.5
Prune juice	1/2 cup	5.2
Clams	2 ounces	4.2
Walnuts	1/2 cup	3.8
Ground beef	3 ounces	3.0
Chickpeas	1/2 cup	3.0
Bran flakes	1/2 cup	2.8
Pork	3 ounces	2.7
Cashews	1/2 cup	2.7
Shrimp	3 ounces	2.6
Raisins	1/2 cup	2.6
Sardines	3 ounces	2.5
Spinach	1/2 cup	2.4
Lima beans	1/2 cup	2.3
Kidney beans	1/2 cup	2.2
Turkey (dark meat)	3 ounces	2.0
Prunes	1/2 cup	1.9
Roast beef	3 ounces	1.8
Peas	1/2 cup	1.5
Peanuts	1/2 cup	1.5
Potatoes	1	1.1
Sweet potatoes	1/2 cup	1.0
Green beans	1/2 cup	1.0
Eggs	1	1.0