

## Information about Iron

- Iron is a mineral that is important for good health.
- Iron carries oxygen to all parts of your body.
- Low iron levels can leave you tired, pale-looking and irritable.

## How much Iron Should I Aim For?

| Age in Years              | Aim for an intake of *milligrams (mg)/day | Stay below* mg/day |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Men 19 and older          | 8   | 45                 |
| Women 19-50               | 18  | 45                 |
| Women 51 and older        | 8   | 45                 |
| Pregnant women 19-50      | 27  | 45                 |
| Breastfeeding women 19-50 | 9   | 45                 |

\*This includes sources of iron from food and supplements.

Vegetarians need almost twice the daily recommended amount of iron compared with non-vegetarians. Iron from plant-based foods is not absorbed as well by our bodies as animal food sources.

## Iron Content of Some Common Foods

You can find iron in both animal and plant foods.

- Animal sources (called “heme iron”) include meat, fish and poultry. Our bodies easily absorb this type of iron.
- Plant sources (called “non-heme iron”) include dried beans, peas and lentils and some fruits and vegetables.
- In Canada, grain products like flour, pasta and breakfast cereals are fortified with iron. Our bodies better absorb this type of iron when taken along with meat/chicken/fish or a source of vitamin C. Vitamin C rich foods include citrus fruits and juices, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers.



The following table will show you which foods are sources of iron.

| Food                              | Serving size                                | Iron (mg) |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Vegetables and Fruits             |   |           |
| Spinach, cooked                   | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 2.0-3.4   |
| Tomato puree                      | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 2.4       |
| Edamame/baby soybeans, cooked     | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.9-2.4   |
| Lima beans, cooked                | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 2.2       |
| Asparagus, raw                    | 6 spears                                    | 2.1       |
| Hearts of palm, canned            | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 2.0       |
| Potato, with skin, cooked         | 1 medium                                    | 1.3-1.9   |
| Snow peas, cooked                 | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.7       |
| Turnip or beet greens, cooked     | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.5-1.7   |
| Prune juice                       | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.6       |
| Apricots, dried                   | 60 mL (¼ cup)                               | 1.6       |
| Beets, canned                     | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.6       |
| Kale, cooked                      | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.3       |
| Green peas, cooked                | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.3       |
| Tomato sauce                      | 125 mL (½ cup)                              | 1.3       |
| Grains Products                   |   |           |
| Oatmeal, instant , cooked         | 175 mL (¾ cup)                              | 4.5-6.6   |
| Cream of wheat, all types, cooked | 175 mL (¾ cup)                              | 5.7-5.8   |
| Cereal, dry, all types            | 30 g (check product label for serving size) | 4.0-4.3   |
| Granola bar, oat, fruits and nut  | 1 bar (32 g)                                | 1.2-2.7   |



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|---|----------------|----------|
| Cracker, soda                               | 6 crackers     | 1.5-2.3  |
| Oat bran cereal, cooked                     | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.0      |
| Pasta, egg noodles, enriched, cooked        | 125 mL (½ cup) | 1.3      |
| Milk and Alternatives                       |                |          |
| Yogurt, soy                                 | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.1      |
| Meats and Alternatives                      |                |          |
| <i>Meat and Poultry</i>                     |                |          |
| Duck, cooked                                | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.8- 7.4 |
| Moose or venison, cooked                    | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 2.5-3.8  |
| Beef, various cuts, cooked                  | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.4-3.3  |
| Ground meat (beef, lamb), cooked            | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.3-2.1  |
| Lamb, various cuts, cooked                  | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.3-2.1  |
| Chicken, various cuts, cooked               | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 0.4-2.0  |
| Pork, various cuts, cooked                  | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 0.5-1.5  |
| Ground meat (turkey, chicken, pork), cooked | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 0.7-0.8  |
| Turkey, various cuts, cooked                | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 0.3-0.8  |
| <i>Organ Meats</i>                          |                |          |
| Liver, pork ,cooked*                        | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 13.4     |
| Liver (chicken, turkey, lamb), cooked*      | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 6.2-9.7  |
| Kidney, lamb, cooked                        | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 9.3      |
| Liver, beef ,cooked*                        | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 4.9      |
| Kidney (beef, veal, pork), cooked           | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 2.3-4.4  |
| <i>Fish and Seafood</i>                     |                |          |
| Octopus, cooked                             | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 7.2      |
| Oysters, cooked                             | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 3.3-9.0  |



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| Seafood (shrimp, scallops, crab), cooked                                     | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 0.6-2.2 |
| Sardines, canned   | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.7-2.2 |
| Clams, canned  | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 2.0     |
| Fish (mackerel, trout, bass), cooked   | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.4-1.7 |
| Tuna, light, canned in water   | 75 g (2 ½ oz)  | 1.2     |
| <i>Meat Alternatives</i>   |                |         |
| Tofu, cooked   | 150 g (¾ cup)  | 2.4-8.0 |
| Soybeans, mature, cooked   | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 6.5     |
| Lentils, cooked  | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 4.1-4.9 |
| Beans (white, kidney, navy, pinto, black, roman/cranberry, adzuki), cooked   | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.6-4.9 |
| Pumpkin or squash seeds, roasted   | 60 mL (¼ cup)  | 1.4-4.7 |
| Peas (chickpeas/garbanzo, black-eyed, split), cooked                         | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 1.9-3.5 |
| Tempeh/fermented soy product, cooked   | 150 g (¾ cup)  | 3.2     |
| Meatless (sausage, chicken, meatballs, fish sticks), cooked                  | 75 g (2.5 oz)  | 1.5-2.8 |
| Baked beans, canned  | 175 mL (¾ cup) | 2.2     |
| Nuts (cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia, pistachio nuts), without shell | 60 ml (¼ cup)  | 1.3-2.2 |
| Eggs, cooked   | 2 large        | 1.2-1.8 |
| Sesame seeds, roasted  | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | 1.4     |
| Meatless, luncheon slices  | 75 g (2.5 oz)  | 1.4     |
| Hummus   | 60 mL (¼ cup)  | 1.5     |
| Almond butter  | 30 mL (2 Tbsp) | 1.1     |





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| Miscellaneous                              |                |     |
| Blackstrap molasses                        | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | 3.6 |
| Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite) | 30 mL (2 Tbsp) | 1.5 |

\*Pregnant women should limit intake of liver to one serving every two weeks.

Source: "Canadian Nutrient File 2015"

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php)

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