Food Sources of Iron

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 and older	27	45
Breastfeeding women 19 and older	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

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

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 Fruit		
Spinach, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	2-3.4
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)	1.2
Grain Products		
Oatmeal, instant, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.5-6.6

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Food	Serving Size	Iron (mg)
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
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)	1.2
Milk and Alternatives		
Yogurt, soy	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.1
Meat and Alternatives		
Meat and Poultry		
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

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Food	Serving Size	Iron (mg)
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
Organ Meats		
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
Fish and Seafood		
Octopus, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	7.2
Oysters, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.3-9.0
Seafood (shrimp, scallops, lobster), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.2-0.4
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
Meat Alternatives		
Tofu, cooked	150 g (¾ cup)	2.4-8

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Soybeans, mature, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	6.5
Food	***Serving Size***	***Iron (mg)***
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	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.4-4.7
Peas (chickpeas/garbanzo beans, 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 ½ 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
Egg, cooked	2 large	1.2-1.8
Sesame seeds, roasted	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	1.4
Meatless, luncheon slices	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4
Hummus	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.5
Almond butter	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.1
Miscellaneous		
Blackstrap molasses	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	3.6
Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.5

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

* Pregnant women should limit intake of liver to one serving every week.

Source: Health Canada, "Canadian Nutrient File 2015" www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php [Accessed June 2016].



Notes

Distributed by:

© 2008 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.