

## Advice for Improving your Iron Intake

Iron is required for maintaining healthy blood. Eating enough iron on a daily basis can help prevent iron deficiency anaemia, which can cause tiredness, fatigue and muscle weakness. People with low iron levels may also have less ability to concentrate and be more prone to catching infections.

The amount of iron we need depends on our age and gender. See the table below for your daily iron requirements.

### Daily Iron Requirements

Age (years)	Males	Females
15-18	11 mg	15 mg
19-50	9 mg	15 mg
50+	9 mg	9 mg

The table overleaf lists foods that are good sources of iron, and gives the amount of iron in a portion of food. You can use this table to make sure you achieve your daily iron requirement.

### Absorbing Iron

Certain food and drink can help or hinder the body's ability to absorb iron. Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron from food, so you should include foods containing vitamin C with each meal. Sources of vitamin C are:

- Fruit, especially citrus fruit (e.g. oranges and grapefruit)
- Fruit juice, especially tomato, orange, apple, pineapple and cranberry juices, but limit to one glass per day
- Potatoes
- Vegetables, especially peas, tomato, broccoli, pepper, cabbage, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, courgettes and spinach

Vitamin C is lost by over-cooking. Boil vegetables quickly in a small amount of water, or steam them.

Tea and coffee contain tannins, which reduce the amount of iron absorbed from foods. Wait half an hour before and after a meal before drinking tea and coffee.

<b>Meat</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Offal (liver *, kidney)	100g	9
Black pudding	1 slice (30g)	6
Beef, corned beef, duck	100g	3
Liver pate *	40g	3
Lamb	100g	2
Chicken, turkey, rabbit, pork	100g	1
Bacon	2 rashers	1
<b>Fish</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Fish paste	1 small jar	3
Tinned pilchards and sardines	1 small tin (100g)	2½
Herring, kippers	100g	1½
Tinned tuna (in brine)	100g	1
<b>Meat/fish alternatives</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Lentils	4 tbsp cooked	4½
Baked beans, butter beans	½ tin (210g)	3
Chickpeas, kidney beans	4 tbsp	3
Soya beans	3 tbsp	3
Tahini paste	1 tsp	2
Hummus	½ tub (85g)	1½
Eggs	1 medium	1
Nuts	1 handful	½
<b>Cereals &amp; Cereal Products</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Special K, Branflakes	30g	6½
Ready brek (dry), All Bran	35-40g	3
Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Weetabix and other fortified cereals	30-40g	2
Poppadum	2 (25g)	2½
Pasta	240g (cooked)	2
Chapatti	1 (55g)	1
Bread (white/brown)	1 medium slice	1
<b>Fruits &amp; Vegetables</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Canned blackcurrants	½ tin (90g)	5
Canned cherries	½ tin (90g)	3
Figs	1 raw or 2 dried	2
Canned raspberries	½ tin (90g)	1½
Raw onion	½ medium	1½
Peas	3 tbsp	1½
Spinach	2½ tbsp	1
Raisins	1 tbsp	1
Dried apricots	3	1
Dried prunes	3	½
<b>Herbs &amp; Spices</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Curry powder, dried herbs	1 tsp	2
Garam masala	1 tsp	1
Chilli powder	1 tsp	½
<b>Snacks, Drinks &amp; Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Portion Size</b>	<b>Iron Content (mg)</b>
Liquorice	small bag (50g)	4
Treacle	1 tsp	3½
Bovril	1 tsp	1½
Peanuts & raisins	1 handful	1½
Gingernuts, oatcakes	2	1
Bombay mix	30g	1
Cocoa	1 tsp	½
Peanut butter	20g (thickly spread)	½

*\*Avoid if you are, or are planning to become pregnant.*