



Increasing your Iron Intake: Tip Sheet

Iron is a mineral that is important for good health. Iron carries oxygen to all parts of your body.

How Much Iron Should I Consume?

Men 19 years and older	8 mg of iron per day
Women 19-50 years of age	18 mg of iron per day
Women 51 years and older	8 mg of iron per day
Pregnant women 19 years and older	27 mg of iron per day
Breastfeeding women 19 years and older	9 mg of iron per day

- No more than 45 mg of iron per day should be consumed by any individual over the age of 19 years.

How Much Iron Should My Child Consume?

Boys and girls 1-3 years old	7 mg of iron per day
Boys and girls 4-8 years old	10 mg of iron per day
Boys and girls 9-13 years old	8 mg of iron per day
Boys 14-18 years old	11 mg of iron per day
Girls 14-18 years old	15 mg of iron per day

- No more than 40 mg of iron per day should be consumed by any child 13 years or younger.
- No more than 45 mg of iron per day should be consumed by any child over the age of 14 years.

3 Tips to Increase your Iron Intake

1. Eat a variety of iron from animal sources (called heme iron) and plant sources (called non-heme iron) everyday.
 - It is important to note that non-heme iron is not absorbed as well as heme iron. Therefore, vegetarians need twice the amount of iron.
 - a. Animal sources include meat, fish and poultry. The amount of iron in each is provided below:

75 g (2 ½ oz) of various cuts of beef	1.4-3.3 mg of iron
75 g (2 ½ oz) of duck	1.8-7.4 mg of iron

75 g (2 ½ oz) of various cuts of pork	0.5-1.5 mg of iron
75 g (2 ½ oz) of various cuts of chicken	0.4-2.0 mg of iron
75 g (2 ½ oz) of cooked fish (mackerel, trout, bass)	1.4-1.7 mg of iron
2 large cooked eggs	1.2-1.8 mg of iron
75 g (2 ½ oz) of canned sardines	1.7-2.2 mg of iron
75 g (2 ½ oz) of cooked oysters	3.3-9.0 mg of iron

- b. Plant sources include tofu, beans, lentils and spinach. The amount of iron in each is provided below:

150 g (¾ cup) of cooked tofu	2.4-8 mg of iron
175 g (¾ cup) of cooked beans (white, kidney, navy, pinto, black)	2.6-4.9 mg of iron
175 g (¾ cup) of cooked peas (chickpeas, black-eyes, split)	1.9-3.5 mg of iron
60 mL (¼ cup) of hummus	1.5 mg of iron
175 g (¾ cup) of cooked lentils	4.1-4.9 mg of iron
125 mL (½ cup) of cooked spinach	2.0-3.4 mg of iron
6 spears of raw asparagus	2.1 mg of iron
60 mL (¼ cup) nuts without shells (cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia, pistachios)	1.3-2.2 mg of iron

2. Drink coffee or tea after meals.
 - Drinking them with meals may decrease iron absorption.
 3. Increase the absorption of iron from plant sources by eating them at the same time as:
 - a. Animal sources of iron
 - b. Foods that are high in vitamin C
 - Including oranges, kiwi, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes and cauliflower.
- Make sure to always read the food labels to ensure all the foods consumed are gluten free. Also look at the nutrition facts table to see the amount of iron in that specific product. Some gluten-free grain products are fortified with iron, so make sure to check the label!

This information is adapted from:

Dietitians of Canada. Food sources of iron. In: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]. 2016 June 10 [cited 2018 May 10]. Available from:

<http://www.pennutrition.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/KnowledgePathway.aspx?kpid=403&trid=12487&trcatid=467>. Access only by subscription or sign up for a free two week trial.

Dietitians of Canada. Increasing your child's iron intake. In: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]. 2014 March 10 [cited 2018 May 10]. Available from:

<http://www.pennutrition.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/KnowledgePathway.aspx?kpid=2764&trid=17890&trcatid=467>. Access only by subscription or sign up for a free two week trial.

Dietitians of Canada. Increasing your iron intake. In: Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition [PEN]. 2015 March 23 [cited 2018 May 10]. Available from:

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