

# Iron

## Daily iron requirements

Age	Males (mg/day)	Females (mg/day)	Pregnancy (mg/day)	Lactation (mg/day)
7-12 months	11	11		
1-3 years	7	7		
4-8 years	10	10		
9-13 years	8	8		
14-18 years	11	15	27	10
19-50 years	8	18	27	9

## Signs of iron deficiency

- Fatigue, irritability
- Pica (craving to eat nonfood items such as paint chips, chalk, or dirt)
- Decreased appetite
- Pale skin color
- Delay in motor/cognitive function

## Are there interactions with other foods or supplements?

### Calcium

Calcium makes it harder for the body to absorb iron either from food or supplements. However, in people who have enough stored iron, this probably isn't a problem. But if you are iron deficient or might become iron deficient, minimize this interaction by separating your intake of calcium and iron. Don't take calcium supplements at mealtime or when you take iron supplements.

### Soy

Soy protein seems to reduce the body's ability to take in iron. If you are iron deficient, choose fermented soy products. They seem to interfere with iron absorption less. However, the real importance of the interaction between soy and iron has not been determined.

### Vitamin C

Taking vitamin C and iron together helps the body absorb the iron. It doesn't matter whether the vitamin C comes from food or a supplement. But, taking a vitamin C supplement to improve absorption of iron probably isn't necessary for most people, especially if their diet contains plenty of vitamin C.

### Food

Taking iron with food can decrease how much iron is absorbed by the body by 40% to 50%. For best absorption, iron should be taken on an empty stomach. But some people may not be able to tolerate this due to side effects such as upset stomach or nausea. If iron needs to be taken with food to reduce side effects, avoid dairy foods, coffee, tea, or cereals.

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## Foods rich in iron

- Vegetables: Spinach, Beet greens, Dandelion greens, Sweet potatoes, Peas, Broccoli, String beans, Collards, Kale, Chard
- Breads & Cereals: White bread (enriched), Whole wheat bread, Enriched macaroni, Wheat products, Bran cereals, Corn meal, Oat cereal, Cream of Wheat, Rye bread, Enriched rice
- Seafood: Shrimp, Dried cod, Mackerel, Sardines, Oysters, Haddock, Clams, Scallops, Tuna
- Fruits: Prunes, Watermelon, Dried apricots, Dried peaches, Strawberries, Prune juice, Raisins, Dates, Figs
- Meats: Liver, Liverwurst, Beef, Lamb, Ham, Turkey, Chicken, Veal, Pork, Dried beef
- Other Foods: Eggs, Dried peas, Dried beans, Instant breakfast, Corn syrup, Maple Syrup, Lentils, Molasses

