

Iron deficiency Anemia is an inadequate red blood cell count that is caused by poor dietary iron intake. This anemia mainly affects women of child bearing age. Common symptoms of anemia include:

- Fatigue or weakness
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Leg pain
- Heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath or poor stamina

Anemia in pregnancy can lead to serious complications in childbirth. Here are some important tips to ensure you are eating enough iron, and absorbing it properly.

Heme iron is a lot more absorbable than non heme iron:

There are two types of iron. Heme iron is derived from animal sources such as red meat, where as non heme iron comes from plant sources such as chickpeas. Heme iron is more easily absorbed by the human body. You can affect the absorbability of iron by eating it with other vitamins, for example eating foods that contain vitamin C with iron, increases its absorbability. However eating calcium with iron decreases its absorbability. Having some heme iron with your vegetables will increase the absorption of the non heme iron (For example you will absorb more iron from your spinach if you have some red meat with it).

Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for iron by age and sex.		
Age/Group	Life Stage	Iron (mg/day)
Infants	0–6 months	0.27*
	7–12 months	11
Children	1–3 years	7
	4–8 years	10
Males	9–13 years	8
	14–18 years	11
	19–30 years	8
	31–50 years	8
	51–70 years	8
Females	>70 years	8
	9–13 years	8
	14–18 years	15
	19–30 years	18
	31–50 years	18
Pregnant Women	51–70 years	8
	>70 years	8
	14–18 years	27
Lactating Women	19–30 years	27
	31–50 years	27
	14–18 years	10
	19–30 years	9
	31–50 years	9

Iron Absorption Enhancers:

- Meat/fish/poultry
- Fruits: Orange, Orange Juice, cantaloupe, strawberries, grapefruit etc
- Vegetables: Broccoli, brussels sprouts, tomato, tomato juice, potato, green & red peppers
- White wine

Iron Absorption Inhibitors:

- Red Wine, Coffee & Tea
- Vegetables: Spinach, chard, beet greens, rhubarb and sweet potato
- Whole grains and bran
- Soy products

The chart to the right includes foods that are good sources of iron, including how many mg of iron per hundred grams of food is contained, and how much of that is absorbed by the typical human digestive system. The chart to the left details the RDA for iron by age and sex.

Product	Amount of iron per 100g	Absorbed amount mg
Meat		
Kidney, fried	12	12
Liver, fried	10	10
Chicken Liver	9	9
Fillet Steak, grilled	4	4
Rump, topside, mince,	3	3
Corned beef	3	3
Duck	3	3
Lamb Chops	2	2
Beef/Pork sausages	2	2
Pork	2	2
Bacon	2	2
Veal	2	2
Bolognese sauce	2	2
Chicken, roast	1	1
Fish		
Mussels, boiled	8	8
Oysters, raw	6	6
Scallops	3	3
Canned sardines	2	2
Canned Tuna	1	1
Canned salmon	1	1
Flounder, baked	1	1
Prawns, boiled	1	1
Cod, baked	0.4	0.4
Dairy products/ eggs		
Egg, fried	3	3
Egg, boiled	2	2
Egg, poached	2	2
Egg, scrambled	2	2
Egg, Omlette	2	2
Cheese, swiss	0.9	0.9
Milk, full cream	0.3	0.3
Milk, non fat	0.1	0.1
Yoghurt	0.1	0.1
Grains/Cereals		
Bran, wheat	13	3.9
Museli	11	3.3
Cornflakes	9	2.7
Puffed Rice	8	2.4
Brown bread	3	0.9
White bread	2	0.6
Pasta	0.5	0.15
Porridge	0.5	0.15
Rice	0.2	0.06
Vegetables		
Parsley	8	2.4
Spinach leaves (boiled)	4	1.2
Kidney/Mung beans	3	0.9
Soy beans	3	0.9
Chickpeas	3	0.9
Endive	3	0.9
Leeks	2	0.6
Peas	2	0.6
Radishes	2	0.6
Lentils	2	0.6
Broccoli	1	0.3
Fruit		
Dried Apricots	4	1.2
Peach, stewed	3	0.9
Avocado	2	0.6
Prunes	2	0.6
Other		
Milo	20	6
Ovaltine	18	5.4
Cocoa powder	11	3.3
Liquorice Allsorts	8	2.4
Pistachio nuts	7	2.1
Cashews	5	1.5