

# 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
- 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.

## 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.

## 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 C rich foods include citrus fruits and juices, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers.

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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, cooked	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
Beet greens, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.5
Artichoke, cooked	1 medium	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)	1.3
Grain Products		
Oatmeal, instant, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.5-6.6
Cream of wheat, all types, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	5.7-5.8
Oatmeal, instant, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	5.1-6.3
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
Granola bar, oat, fruits and nut	1 bar	2.3
Oat bran cereal, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.0
Pasta, egg noodles, enriched, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
Milk and Alternatives		
Yogurt, soy	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.0

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Meat and Alternatives		
<i>Meat and Poultry</i>		
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)	1.3-2.2
Lamb, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4-3.3
Chicken, various types, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.4-2.0
Pork, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.5-1.0
Ground meat (turkey, chicken, pork), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.8-1.2
Turkey, various types, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.3-0.8
<i>Organ Meat</i>		
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
<i>Fish and Seafood</i>		
Octopus, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	7.2
Oysters, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.3-9.0
Seafood (shrimp, scallops, crab), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.2-2.3
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
<i>Meat Alternatives</i>		
Tofu, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.4-8.0
Soybeans, mature, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	6.5
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, blackeyed, split), cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	1.9-3.5

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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
Tempeh/fermented soy product, cooked	100g	2.1
Eggs, 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)	1.4
Almond butter	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.2
Miscellaneous		
Blackstrap molasses	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	3.6
Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.4

\*Pregnant women should limit intake of liver to one serving every two weeks.

Source:

"Canadian Nutrient File" 2010

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php>

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