

# Iron Foods to Help Your Health

## What is anemia?

- Anemia is when your blood levels are low, such as iron, hemoglobin, or hematocrit.
- Low iron is one of the most common causes of anemia. It can make you feel tired, weak, or short of breath when you are active. It may also make it harder to do your usual daily tasks.
- If you have kidney disease, you may be more likely to have low iron. That is why getting enough iron is important

## My doctor said my iron is low, what can I do?

There are a few ways to help raise your iron level.

- You may need an iron supplement.
- You may need iron through an IV.
- You may need to make changes to what you eat.

Your doctor will help choose what is best for you.



## What foods can I eat to help increase my iron level?

- Animal proteins are the best source of iron because your body can use this kind of iron more easily.
- Some plant foods also have iron, but your body does not absorb that iron as well.
- If you eat mostly plant foods, there are still ways to help your body absorb more iron.
- You can also cook with a cast iron pan. This may help add more iron to your food.

## How can I absorb more iron from my food?

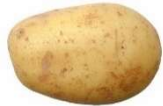
- A simple way to absorb more iron is to eat iron-rich foods with foods high in vitamin C.
- For example, if you eat chicken with lemon, your body can absorb more iron from the chicken.

## Important note:

- **Some foods that are high in iron are also high in potassium. If your potassium is high, you may need to limit or avoid these foods.**
- **Talk with your doctor or dietitian if you are not sure which foods are safe for you.**

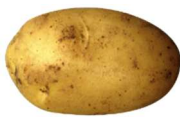
| Animal Foods High in Iron |                     |                        |                   |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Beef (*)</b><br>       | <b>Bison</b><br>    | <b>Chicken</b><br>     | <b>Turkey</b><br> | <b>Duck</b><br>     |
| <b>Pork (*)</b><br>       | <b>Lamb (*)</b><br> | <b>Organ Meats</b><br> | <b>Tuna</b><br>   | <b>Sardines</b><br> |
| <b>Shrimp</b><br>         | <b>Crab</b><br>     | <b>Oysters</b><br>     | <b>Clams</b><br>  | <b>Mussels</b><br>  |

## Plant Foods High in Iron

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Enriched Grains, Breads &amp; Pastas</b><br> | <b>Fortified Ready-to-Eat Cereals</b><br> | <b>Oats &amp; Cream of Wheat</b><br> | <b>Soybeans (*)</b><br>                  | <b>Beans (*) (all varieties)</b><br> |
| <b>Lentils (*)</b><br>                          | <b>Chickpeas (*)</b><br>                  | <b>Green Peas (*)</b><br>            | <b>Potatoes (*) (all varieties)</b><br> | <b>Stewed Tomatoes</b><br>           |
| <b>Spinach (*)</b><br>                          | <b>Artichoke (*)</b><br>                  | <b>Asparagus</b><br>                 | <b>Yellow Beans</b><br>                  | <b>Mushrooms (*)</b><br>             |
| <b>Beets (*)</b><br>                           | <b>Acorn Squash (*)</b><br>              | <b>Sesame Seeds (*)</b><br>         | <b>Pumpkin Seeds (*)</b><br>            | <b>Sunflower Seeds (*)</b><br>      |
| <b>Nuts (*)</b><br>                           | <b>Dried Fruit (*)</b><br>              | <b>Tofu (*)</b><br>                | <b>Quinoa</b><br>                      | <b>Dark Chocolate (*)</b><br>      |

## Vitamin C Rich Foods

Vitamin C increases the amount of iron that is absorbed from your food.  
Try eating vitamin C rich foods with a high iron food at the same meal to absorb more iron.

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bell Peppers</b><br> | <b>Broccoli</b><br>       | <b>Brussels Sprouts (*)</b><br> | <b>Cabbage</b><br>   | <b>Cauliflower</b><br>    |
| <b>Potatoes (*)</b><br> | <b>Chili Peppers</b><br>  | <b>Tomatoes (*)</b><br>         | <b>Orange</b><br>    | <b>Grapefruit</b><br>     |
| <b>Strawberries</b><br> | <b>Cantaloupe (*)</b><br> | <b>Papaya (*)</b><br>           | <b>Pineapple</b><br> | <b>Kiwi (*)</b><br>       |
| <b>Mango (*)</b><br>    | <b>Gooseberries</b><br>   | <b>Lemon</b><br>                | <b>Guava (*)</b><br> | <b>Black Currants</b><br> |

# High Iron Meal & Snack Ideas

## Breakfast Meals

### Egg & Ham Hash with Orange:

eggs, ham (low sodium), shredded potatoes (\*), bell peppers, onions, salt-free seasonings, orange



### Strawberry Almond Oatmeal:

oats, strawberries, almonds, unsweetened plant milk, cinnamon, sugar substitute



### Cereal with Milk with Grapefruit:

plain whole grain cereal, low fat milk, chopped nuts (\*), sugar substitute, grapefruit



### Southwest Scrambled Eggs with Toast:

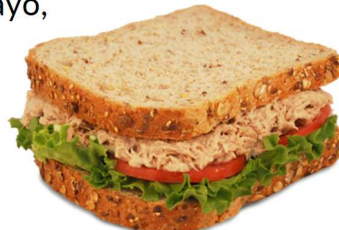
eggs, no salt beans (\*), spinach (\*), mushrooms, tomatoes (\*), salt-free seasonings, whole wheat bread



## Lunch & Dinner Meals

### Tuna Salad Sandwich:

canned tuna in water, mayo, salt-free seasonings, whole wheat bread, lettuce, tomato (\*)



### Chicken & Bean Burrito:

chicken, no salt beans (\*), low-fat cheese, tortilla, lettuce, tomatoes (\*), corn, salt-free taco seasoning



### Chicken Asparagus Pasta:

chicken, whole wheat pasta, asparagus, tomatoes (\*), onion, garlic, lemon juice, plant-based butter, salt-free seasonings



### Steak with Mashed Potatoes & Roasted Broccoli:

steak, low sodium sauce, mashed potatoes (\*), roasted broccoli, salt-free seasonings



### Shrimp Fried Quinoa:

shrimp, egg, quinoa, no salt peas (\*), carrots, bell peppers, onion, garlic, low sodium sauce



### Tofu & Brown Rice Stir-Fry:

Tofu (\*), brown rice, carrots, bell peppers, snap peas, shredded cabbage, onion, garlic, low sodium sauce



## Snacks

**Celery with Peanut Butter & Raisins:**  
celery, raisins (\*), or cranberries,  
natural peanut butter (\*)



**Crackers with Spicy Hummus:**  
whole grain low sodium crackers,  
low sodium hummus (\*),  
chili powder



**Half Turkey Sandwich with Veggies:**  
low sodium sliced turkey,  
whole wheat bread,  
mayo, mustard,  
lettuce, tomato (\*),  
bell peppers



**Homemade Trail Mix:**  
unsalted mixed nuts (\*),  
unsalted sunflower seeds (\*),  
no sugar added dried fruit



## Desserts

**Peanut Butter & Strawberry Toast:**  
natural peanut butter (\*),  
strawberries,  
whole wheat bread



**Tropical Yogurt Parfait:**  
plain plant-based yogurt,  
pineapple, mango (\*),  
chopped nuts (\*)



**Chia Seed Pudding:**  
chia seeds (\*), kiwi (\*),  
unsweetened  
shredded coconut,  
unsweetened plant milk,  
cinnamon, sugar substitute



**Chocolate Peanut Butter Oatmeal:**  
oats, unsweetened cocoa powder,  
unsweetened plant milk,  
peanut butter (\*),  
sugar substitute



**All foods with the red (\*) means that food is high in potassium.**

## Foods That Can Make It Harder to Absorb Iron:

- Some foods can make it harder for your body to use iron when eaten at the same time.
- These foods include eggs, coffee, tea, beet greens, chard, rhubarb, grapes, corn, and foods with calcium like milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Try eating these foods at a different time than iron-rich foods.



For general nutrition coaching, education, and referral support only; not for nutrition diagnosis or individualized therapeutic nutrition planning.