

Iron in Pregnancy

Iron is a crucially important nutrition in pregnancy. Iron is used by the body to make hemoglobin- a molecule present in red blood cells. Hemoglobin is responsible for carrying oxygen throughout your body (to your muscles, brain and heart), as well as to your developing baby.

Your blood can be checked to make sure you have an adequate amount of hemoglobin. Having a low hemoglobin level is called having anemia. Symptoms of anemia include fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath, although not all people will have symptoms.

In pregnancy, the need for iron increases as your body is manufacturing more red blood cells and circulating oxygen to your baby. It is recommended that pregnancy women get 27 mg of iron per day in their diet (compared to 18 mg for non-pregnant women). Most prenatal vitamins contain iron, but gummies generally do NOT.

Iron Rich Foods

FOOD SOURCE	AMOUNT TO EAT <i>3 ounces= about the size of deck of cards</i>	APPROXIMATE IRON CONTENT
Chicken Liver	3 ounces	10 mg
Oysters (cooked)	3 medium oysters	7 mg
Steak (beef or venison)	3 ounces	4 mg
Swiss Chard	1 cup cooked	4 mg
Soy Beans (Edamame)	½ cup	3.5 mg
Pumpkin seeds	¼ cup	3.5 mg
Lentils	½ cup cooked	3.5 mg
Spinach	½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw	3 mg
Tofu (firm, cooked)	½ cup	3 mg
Clams (cooked)	4 large or 8 small	2.8 mg
Beef/Venison (ground)	3 ounces	2.5 mg
Sunflower seeds	¼ cup	2 mg
Beans: black, pinto, garbanzo	½ cup cooked	2 mg
Blackstrap Molasses	2 tablespoons	2 mg
Spirulina	2 tablespoons	2 mg
Prune Juice	½ cup	2 mg
Pork or Lamb	3 ounces	1.5 mg
Dark Meat Turkey	3 ounces	1.5 mg
Dried apricots	1/3 cup	1.3 mg
Almonds	¼ cup	1.3 mg
Baked potato with skin	1 medium	1.3 mg

FORTIFIED BREAKFAST CEREAL (1 CUP)	APPROXIMATE IRON CONTENT
Total Cereal (General Mills)	18 mg
Multi grain Cheerios (Gluten Free)	18 mg
Chex Cereal (wheat)	16 mg
Kellogg's Special K Honey & Oat	11 mg
Post Raisin Bran	10 mg
Quaker Instant Oatmeal (original)	8 mg
Cream of Wheat (original)	8 mg

**** Note- No substitutions! If you choose brand or flavor other than what is listed above you must read the nutrition information label to verify the iron content!**

Other Tips

- * Iron from meat is 2-3 times better absorbed than iron from non-meat sources. For that reason, vegetarians and vegans may require a higher daily iron intake
- * Using cast iron cook wear can slightly increase the iron content in the food you cook
- * Eating iron rich foods with vitamin C containing foods (citrus, tomatoes, berries, and peppers) can help with absorption
- * However eating iron rich foods with other foods high in calcium (especially milk and dairy products) may decrease absorption
- * Folic acid helps your body to make healthy red blood cells. Make sure you're getting plenty of folic acid in your diet with foods like beans, dark leafy greens and oranges

Iron Supplements

In certain circumstances it may be recommended that you start an iron supplement. You may be prescribed a pill to take. If not, below is a list of easy to find, safe choices. There are many different forms of iron supplements, so please follow the recommended dose and administration guidelines.

Iron supplements are best taken with food (especially food high in vitamin C- such as tomatoes, oranges, lemons, berries and peppers). They should not be taken at the same time as your prenatal vitamin, antacids or thyroid medication. It is also best to avoiding taking these supplements with foods high in calcium (like milk, or lots of cheese).

BRAND	HOW OFTEN TO TAKE	OTHER INFO
Nature Made Iron 65 mg (vegan GF) <i>Ferrous Sulfate</i>	Once per day	Can be taken without food
Country Life Gentle Iron 25 mg (vegan, GF) <i>Ferrous Bisglycinate</i>	Once per day	Needs to be taken with food for best absorption
Fergon Brand 27 mg <i>Ferrous Gluconate</i>	Once per day	Can be taken without food
VegLife Vegan Chewable Iron (berry flavor) 18 mg <i>Ferrous Glycinate</i>	Once per day	Contains Vit C, folate and B12, suagar-free
Wellese Liquid Iron by Nature's Way 18 mg (berry flavor) <i>Ferrous Glycinate</i>	Once per day	18mg in 1 tablespoon, sugar-free, can be added to smoothies