

The Importance of Iron

Absorption of iron occurs within three hours of eating. Since our bodies sometimes need help maintaining a sufficient iron reserve, it is very important to add iron-rich foods to your diet to keep your iron level adequate for donation.

Meat and Meat Substitutes

Lean red meats (beef, lamb, pork, veal)
Organ meats (liver, gizzards)
Poultry
Eggs
Seafood
Nuts
Beans

Fruits and Vegetables

Dark green, leafy vegetables
Beans (green, lima, peas)
Root vegetables (beets, white potato)
Cauliflower
Sprouts (beans, alfalfa)
Artichokes
Dried fruit (dates, prunes, raisins)

Breads and Cereals

Enriched, fortified and whole-grain breads
Cereal
Grains (oats, wheat, bran)
Wild rice
Macaroni

Helpful Hints

- Caffeine (coffee, tea and cola), high-fiber cellulose food (celery), and some antacid medications may decrease iron absorption
- Dairy products will also decrease the absorption of iron
- Increase iron absorption by including food and drinks high in vitamin C (fruit and fruit juice) along with the iron rich food
- The best rule is to eat regular, nutritionally balanced meals, and drink plenty of fluids