

Iron Tips

1 Eat foods that are good sources of iron every day.

- Just eating a little meat with other foods can increase the iron your body can get from foods. For example, try putting a small amount of meat into your cooked beans. Meat is an “iron helper” -- it helps your body use the iron from other foods.
- If you are a vegetarian, eat beans often.
- When preparing dry beans, soak beans for several hours in cold water before you cook them. Pour off the water and use new water to cook the beans. Your body will take in more iron this way.



2 Eat vitamin-C foods with iron-rich foods to help your body use iron better.

- Eat foods rich in vitamin C together with iron-rich foods. Vitamin-C foods are “iron-helpers” too. For example, eat an orange or strawberries with your breakfast cereal or have some salsa on your taco.
- Cook vitamin-C foods and iron-rich foods together. For example, cook your beans with tomatoes or chilies.
- For more examples of Vitamin-C and iron-rich foods, see *Iron Tips—Take Two*.

3 Coffee, tea and sodas may block iron from getting into your body.

- If you drink coffee or tea (including decaffeinated), drink them between meals.

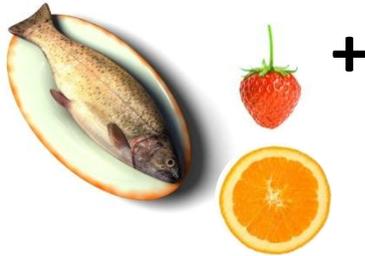
4 Cook foods in cast-iron skillets, pots or pans to add extra iron to your food.

5 Follow your medical provider’s recommendation about multivitamins or prenatal vitamins. They have extra iron that you may need.

Iron Tips—Take Two!

Iron Helpers:

Foods rich in vitamin C
or meats



+

Foods rich in iron



= Your body
uses **more**
iron!

Foods rich in vitamin C

Vegetables

- Tomato
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Bell pepper
- Chili peppers
- Cabbage

Fruits

- Oranges
- Cantaloupe
- Grapefruit
- Strawberry
- Kiwi
- Mango
- Papaya

Juices

- Orange
- Grapefruit
- Tomato
- Lemon/lime

Foods rich in iron

Meats

- Organ meats (liver, giblets); **no more than once a week**
- Beef
- Duck
- Lamb
- Shrimp
- Fish
- Shell fish, such as clams and oysters

Non-Meats

- WIC-approved cereals
- Fortified instant cereals
- Soybeans
- Pumpkin/squash seeds
- Dry beans, cooked
- Lentils
- Spinach
- Dark green leafy vegetables, such as collard and spinach
- Eggs
- Bread/tortillas
- Rice/pasta
- Tomato paste
- Prune juice
- Dried fruit

Read food labels!

Iron is added to many foods. Look for food labels that say “enriched” or “fortified.” Some foods that may have extra iron are bread, rice, tortillas, cereals, and pasta.

Vitamin C is added to some foods because we need to have it every day. Look for labels that say “added vitamin C.” Juices are a good example of a vitamin C enriched product. Check the label to see if each serving has 50% or more of the vitamin C that you need. Juice is high in natural sugar.

Limit juice intake to ½-1 cup per day.

! Avoid buying “fruit drinks” and other sweetened drinks that are high in sugar. Look for labels that say “100% juice.”

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