Pumping Up Your Iron Intake

Children and adolescents have the greatest need for iron

What is Iron? Iron is a mineral that your body must have to carry oxygen to the rest of your body.

IRON IN YOUR DIET COMES FROM TWO SOURCES:

1) Animal Iron
This type of iron is more easily absorbed and used by your body.

   Fish
   Lamb
   Beef
   Oysters
   Chicken
   Liver
   Tuna

2) Plant Iron
Your body can use plant iron better if you eat it with a food that has Vitamin C, like citrus fruits, green peppers, strawberries, tomatoes, and potatoes.

Foods with Iron: Add it Up!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iron (mg)</th>
<th>Oysters (3 oz)</th>
<th>Cream of Wheat (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Beef liver, braised (3 oz)</th>
<th>Kidney, lima, navy, black, pinto, soybeans, and lentils (1 cup)</th>
<th>Fortified breakfast cereal (1 cup)*</th>
<th>Pumpkin seeds (1 oz)</th>
<th>Prunes/Pitted Plums (1 cup)</th>
<th>Walnuts (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Blackstrap molasses (1 Tb)</th>
<th>Lean sirloin or ground beef (3 oz)</th>
<th>Chickpeas/Garbanzo beans (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Bran (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Raisins (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Spinach, boiled (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Tofu, firm (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Oatmeal, cooked (1 cup)</th>
<th>Enriched rice, cooked (1/2 cup)</th>
<th>Egg (1)</th>
<th>Whole wheat bread (1 slice)</th>
<th>Peanut butter, chunky (2 Tbs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.2 mg</td>
<td>7.8 mg</td>
<td>5.8 mg</td>
<td>5.0 mg</td>
<td>4.5-18 mg</td>
<td>4.2 mg</td>
<td>3.8 mg</td>
<td>3.7 mg</td>
<td>3.5 mg</td>
<td>3.0 mg</td>
<td>3.0 mg</td>
<td>3.0 mg</td>
<td>2.5 mg</td>
<td>2.4 mg</td>
<td>2.0 mg</td>
<td>1.7 mg</td>
<td>1.4 mg</td>
<td>1.0 mg</td>
<td>0.9 mg</td>
<td>0.6 mg</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How Much Iron Does My Child Need?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant/Child 0-10 yrs</td>
<td>6-10 mg /day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents 11-18 yrs</td>
<td>15 mg /day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips To Help Improve Iron Absorption:

- Include a source of Vitamin C with meals.
- Remember that iron from raw food is easier for your body to use than from cooked food.
- Milk and caffeine can make it harder for your body to use iron, so try to eat a lot of foods with iron at separate times.
- If your doctor prescribes iron supplements, take them on an empty stomach or with orange juice to increase absorption.

* Amount varies. Read the nutrition label. (Raisin Bran, Total, Life, & Cheerios are well fortified.)

*To schedule an appointment with a Registered Dietician, please call MGH Ambulatory Nutrition Services at 617-726-2729.