

# Food Sources of Iron

## Information about Iron

Iron is a mineral that is important for good health.  
Iron carries oxygen to all parts of your body.  
Low iron levels can leave you tired, pale-looking and irritable.

## How Much Iron Should I Aim For?

<i>Age in years</i>	<i>Aim for an intake of* milligrams (mg)/day</i>	<i>Stay below* mg/day</i>
Men 19 and older	8	45
Women 19-50	18	45
Women 51 and older	8	45
Pregnant women 19 and older	27	45
Breastfeeding women 19 and older	9	45

\*This includes sources of iron from food and supplements.

Vegetarians need almost twice the daily recommended amount of iron compared with non-vegetarians. Iron from plant-based foods is not absorbed as well by our bodies as animal food sources.

## Iron Content of Some Common Foods

You can find iron in both animal and plant foods.

Animal sources (called "heme iron") include meat, fish and poultry. Our bodies easily absorb this type of iron.

Plant sources (called "non-heme iron") include dried beans, peas and lentils and some fruits and vegetables.

In Canada, grain products like flour, pasta and breakfast cereals

are fortified with iron. Our bodies better absorb this type of iron when taken along with meat/chicken/fish or a source of vitamin C. Vitamin C rich foods include citrus fruits and juices, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes and peppers.

The following table will show you which foods are sources of iron.

<i><b>Food</b></i>	<i><b>Serving Size</b></i>	<i><b>Iron (mg)</b></i>
<i><b>Vegetables and Fruit</b></i>		
Spinach, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	2-3.4
Tomato puree	125 mL (½ cup)	2.4
Edamame/baby soybeans, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.9-2.4
Lima beans, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	2.2
Asparagus, raw	6 spears	2.1
Hearts of palm, canned	125 mL (½ cup)	2.0
Potato, with skin, cooked	1 medium	1.3-1.9
Snow peas, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.7
Turnip or beet greens, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.5-1.7
Prune juice	125 mL (½ cup)	1.6
Apricots, dried	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.6
Beets, canned	125 mL (½ cup)	1.6
Kale, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
Green peas, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3

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Tomato sauce	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
<b>Grain Products</b>		
Oatmeal, instant, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.5-6.6
Cream of wheat, all types, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	5.7-5.8
Cereal, dry, all types	30 g (check product label for serving size)	4.0-4.3
Granola bar, oat, fruits and nut	1 bar (32 g)	1.2-2.7
Cracker, soda	6 crackers	1.5-2.3
Oat bran cereal, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.0
Pasta, egg noodles, enriched, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>		
Yogurt, soy	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.0
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>		
Meat and Poultry		
Duck, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.8-7.4
Moose or venison, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.5-3.8
Beef, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4-3.3
Ground meat (beef, lamb), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.3-2.2

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Lamb, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.3-2.1
Chicken, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.4-2.0
Pork, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.5-1.5
Ground meat (turkey, chicken, pork), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.8-1.2
Turkey, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.3-0.8
Organ Meats		
Liver, pork, cooked*	75 g (2 ½ oz)	13.4
Liver (chicken, turkey, lamb) cooked*	75 g (2 ½ oz)	6.2-9.7
Kidney, lamb, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	9.3
Liver, beef, cooked*	75 g (2 ½ oz)	4.9
Kidney (beef, veal, pork), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.3-4.4
Fish and Seafood		
Octopus, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	7.2
Oysters, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.3-9.0
Seafood (shrimp, scallops, crab), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.2-2.3
Sardines, canned	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.7-2.2
Clams, canned	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.0
Fish (mackerel, trout, bass),	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4-1.7

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cooked		
Tuna, light, canned in water	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.2
<b>Meat Alternatives</b>		
Tofu, cooked	150 g (¾ cup)	2.4-8
Soybeans, mature, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	6.5
Lentils, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.1-4.9
Beans (white, kidney, navy, pinto, black, roman/cranberry, adzuki), cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.6-4.9
Pumpkin or squash seeds	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.4-4.7
Peas (chickpeas/garbanzo beans, black-eyed, split), cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	1.9-3.5
Tempeh/fermented soy product, cooked	150 g (¾ cup)	3.2
Meatless (sausage, chicken, meatballs, fish sticks), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.5-2.8
Baked beans, canned	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.2
Nuts (cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia, pistachio nuts), without shell	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.3-2.2
Egg, cooked	2 large	1.2-1.8
Sesame seeds, roasted	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	1.4
Meatless, luncheon slices	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4

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Hummus	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.4
Almond butter	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.2
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Blackstrap molasses	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	3.6
Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.4

\*Pregnant women should limit intake of liver to one serving every two weeks.

Source: Health Canada, "Canadian Nutrient File 2010" [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php)  
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