

South Warwickshire



NHS Foundation Trust

Warwickshire Dietetic Service

How to Increase your Iron Intake

Iron is important as it enables red blood cells to carry oxygen around our bodies. A poor iron intake can lead to iron deficiency anaemia. As a result, you may feel tired, dizzy or a little breathless. Diet can play an important role in preventing and treating iron deficiency anaemia. This leaflet provides information on how to increase your dietary iron intake.

The recommended intakes for iron in the UK are:

Males	0-3 months	1.7mg / day
	4-6 months	4.3mg / day
	6-12 months	7.8mg / day
	1 - 3 years	6.9 mg / day
	4 - 6 years	6.1 mg / day
	7 - 10 years	8.7mg / day
	11 - 18 years	11.3 mg / day
	Over 19 years	8.7 mg / day
Females	0-3 months	1.7mg / day
	4-6 months	4.3mg / day
	6-12 months	7.8mg / day
	1 - 3 years	6.9 mg / day
	4 - 6 years	6.1 mg / day
	7 - 10 years	8.7mg / day
	11 - 50 years	14.8mg / day
	Over 50 years	8.7 mg / day

What if I can't get enough iron from my food?

Iron is best taken in food as part of a healthy diet but if it is not possible to achieve the levels indicated, supplements may be needed. However, this should only be considered if you have been told you have iron deficiency anaemia, as high intakes can affect the absorption of other nutrients.

Non-prescribable food supplements are available over-the-counter and can be taken if an adequate iron intake is not being achieved. It is cheaper, more effective and safer to include iron-rich foods into your diet.

Which foods contain the most iron?

Iron can be found in both animal and plant based foods however, the iron found in animal based foods is more easily absorbed into our bodies.

The following tables provide the estimated iron content of various common foods.

Iron Content of Meat Products

Food	Portion Size	Iron (mg/portion)	Iron (mg/100g)
Faggots (no gravy)	2 faggots (150g)	12.5	8.5
Ox Kidney	Average portion in gravy (112g)	10.8	9.0
Black Pudding	1 Portion (75g)	9.3	12.3
Lambs liver	1 portion (100g)	7.7	7.7
Rump Steak (grilled)	Medium (144g)	5.2	3.6
Liver Pate	Starter sized portion (80g)	4.7	5.9
Lambs Kidney	Average portion (35g)	4.0	11.2
Minced Beef	Medium portion (140g)	3.8	2.7
Duck	Medium portion, meat only (100g)	2.7	2.7
Sardines	1 average portion canned (100g)	2.3	2.3
Roast Beef - Topside	2 thick slices (90g)	2.3	2.6
Oxtail Soup	Medium portion (220g)	2.2	1.0
Pheasant	Average portion (100g)	2.2	2.2
Steak & Kidney Pie	Individual pie (160g)	2.1	1.3
Lamb Chop	Average chop (100g)	2.1	2.1
Mackerel	1 medium smoked mackerel (150g)	1.8	1.2
Roast Beef - Sirloin	2 thick slices (90g)	1.7	1.9
Tuna, canned in oil (drained)	1 small can (100g)	1.6	1.6
Roast Leg Lamb	3 slices (90g)	1.6	1.8
Beef Sausage	2 sausages (80g)	1.4	1.8
Corned Beef	1 thick slice (50g)	1.2	2.4
Pork Chop	Average chop (100g)	1.2	1.2
Roast Pork	Medium portion (90g)	0.9	1.0
Beefburger	1 Burger (80% beef) (36g)	0.9	2.5
Turkey	Breast fillet (100g)	0.8	0.8
Chicken	Average chicken breast (100g)	0.8	0.8
Tongue	1 average slice (25g)	0.7	2.6
Salmon	Average salmon steak (100g)	0.5	0.5

Iron Contents of Non-Meat Products

Food group	Food	Portion size	Iron (mg/portion)	Iron (mg/100g)
Beans and Pulses	Soya beans (boiled)	100g	3.0	3.0
	Green & brown lentils (cooked)	1 tablespoon (40g)	1.4	3.5
	Butter beans	Average portion (90g)	1.3	1.5
	Red Lentils (cooked)	1 tablespoon(40g)	1.0	2.4
	Baked beans	1 tablespoon (40g)	0.6	1.4
	Peas	1 tablespoon (40g)	0.6	1.5
	Kidney beans (canned)	1 tablespoon (30g)	0.6	2.0
	Chick peas (canned)	1 tablespoon (35g)	0.5	1.5
	Hummus	1 tablespoon(20g)	0.4	1.9
Meat Substitutes	Tofu (steamed & fried)	Average portion (140g)	4.9	3.5
	Tofu (steamed only)	Average portion (140g)	1.7	1.2
Eggs	Eggs	1 average (50g)	1.0	1.9
Dried Fruit	Prunes	6 stewed (60g)	1.6	2.6
	Raisins (dried)	1 tablespoon (30g)	1.1	3.8
	Figs (dried)	1 dried(20g)	0.8	4.2
	Apricots	1 dried (8g)	0.3	3.4
	Dates	1 dried (15g)	0.2	1.3
Nuts & Seeds	Tahini paste	1 heaped teaspoon (19g)	2.0	10.6
	Cashew nuts	Roasted salted bag (25g)	1.6	6.2
	Sesame seeds	1 tablespoon (12g)	1.2	10.4
	Sunflower seeds	1 tablespoon (16g)	1.0	6.4
	Pine nuts	1 tablespoon (10g)	0.6	5.6
	Peanut Butter	1 tablespoon(20g)	0.5	2.5
	Almonds	6 whole (13g)	0.4	3.0
	Brazil nuts	3 whole (10g)	0.3	2.5
	Hazelnuts	Approx handful (10g)	0.3	3.2
	Peanuts	10 whole (13g)	0.3	2.5

Iron Contents of Non-Meat Products

Food group	Food	Portion size	Iron (mg/portion)	Iron (mg/100g)
Vegetables	Spinach	Average serving (90g)	1.4	1.6
	Boiled spring greens	Medium portion (95g)	1.3	1.4
	Jacket potato	Medium with skin (180g)	0.7	1.3
	Avocado	1 medium (145g)	0.6	0.4
	Green beans	Medium portion (90g)	0.5	0.6
	Courgettes	Medium portion (90g)	0.5	0.6
	Cabbage	Medium portion (95g)	0.3	0.3
Breads & Flour Products	Soya flour	100g	6.9	6.9
	Wholemeal spaghetti	Medium portion boiled (220g)	3.1	1.4
	Naan	Plain (160g)	2.6	1.6
	Toasted teacake	Average (55g)	1.6	2.9
	Chapatti	Average without fat (55g)	1.2	2.1
	Soft brown roll	Average (43g)	1.0	2.4
	Cheese & tomato Pizza	Per slice	1.4	1.0
	Wholemeal bread	Medium slice (36g)	0.9	2.4
	Brown bread	Medium slice (36g)	0.8	2.2
	White bread	Medium slice (36g)	0.6	1.6
	Digestive biscuits	1 biscuit (15g)	0.5	3.2
Cereals (Fortified cereals are best)	Ready Brek	Medium bowl (30g)	3.6	11.9
	Sultana bran	Medium bowl (40g)	7.3	18.2
	Special K	Medium bowl (30g)	7.0	23.3
	Weetabix	2 biscuits (40g)	4.8	11.9
	Cheerios	Medium bowl (30g)	3.8	12.8
	Weetos	Small bowl (30g)	3.6	11.9
	Oatibix flakes	Small bowl (30g)	3.6	11.9
	Shreddies	Medium bowl (45g)	3.5	7.8
	Cornflakes	Average portion (30g)	2.4	7.9
	Rice Krispies	Average portion (30g)	2.4	7.9
	Sugar Puffs	Medium bowl (30g)	2.4	8.0
	Shredded Wheat	2 biscuits (45g)	1.9	4.2

Iron Contents of Non-Meat Products

Infant Formula			Iron (mg/portion)	Iron (mg/100g)
	First Milks and Hungry baby milk		0.2 per oz (30ml)	0.5 per 100ml
	Follow on Formula (at 6 months)		0.3 per oz (30ml)	1.1 per 100ml
	Toddler milk		0.4 per oz (30ml)	1.2 per 100ml
Average values for Infant formula , please see packaging for brand specific values				
Miscellaneous	Liquorice Allsorts	Small bag (56g)	4.1	7.3
	* Black treacle	Average spread (15g)	3.2	21.3
	* Plain chocolate	Small bar (50g)	1.2	2.3
	* Milk chocolate	Standard bar (54g)	0.8	1.4
	Chocolate Nut Spread	Spread moderately on bread (20g)	0.4	2.0
	Stout	½ pint (280ml)	0.1	Trace

* These items contain a lot of sugar so may not be suitable for everyone. Please consult your health care professional if you require any advice regarding this.

All the values have been rounded to the nearest decimal place.

Foods that slow down iron absorption

Polyphenols such as tannins found in tea and red wine may reduce the amount of iron you absorb so try to avoid these 1 hour before and 1 hour after your meals.

How can I make the most of the iron in my diet?

Vitamin C helps us absorb more iron from plant based foods. Having food or drink high in vitamin C at mealtimes increases the amount of iron that is absorbed. For example:

Citrus fruit e.g. oranges, grapefruit
 Fruit juice
 Blackcurrants
 Vegetables or salad
 Cordials with added vitamin C

Aim for 5 portions of vegetables, salad or fruit each day and include at least 1 glass of fruit juice.

Note: for children under 5, pure fruit juice should be diluted 1 part juice to 10 parts water to protect dental health.

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance to the hospital.

If you have any queries about your diet, please contact us:

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