



Iron (Fe^{+2} is called ferrous iron). Animal sources of iron are called heme sources. Plant based sources are called non-heme sources. Combine non-heme sources with a vitamin C rich food such as bell peppers, kiwi fruit, oranges, citrus vinaigrette, or 4 ounce serving of orange juice because vitamin C helps to absorb iron into the blood.

Some hints about getting iron into your diet and how to enhance iron absorption:

1. Use an iron skillet in your cooking.
2. Consume red meat 1-2x/week. Trim fat.
3. Eat chicken and seafood. Studies indicate a fish meal 2x per week is associated with positive overall health outcomes.
4. Snack on raisins or apricots. Consider figs, dates, or prunes as snacks. Make your own "trail mix" with pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, and pistachios. Look for no salt added nuts.
5. Make a bean/lentil salad with a lemon vinaigrette.
6. Check your cereal label to eat iron fortified cereals (low in added sugar- less than 5% daily value on nutrition label) with a 4-ounce serving of orange juice with pulp (for fiber). Milk can limit iron absorption so eat cereal in a trail mix or use a dairy alternative milk on cereal.
7. Consume whole grain breads and pasts enriched with iron.
8. Eat spinach, Bok choy, and broccoli with vitamin C rich food.
9. Watch so children do not drink excessive milk which can fill up child before iron rich foods can be consumed. Milk can also limit iron absorption. Try to limit milk to 2 cups per day if child drinks excessive milk which may crowd out other foods. Separate the consumption of iron containing foods from coffee or tea by at least one hour.
10. Add peas and beans to casseroles and soups.
11. Serve Cream of Wheat fortified hot cereal for breakfast or as a snack.
12. Add blackstrap molasses to muffins baked beans and cereals.
13. If prescribed a ferrous iron supplement, take it in the morning away from other foods and coffee or tea. Wash down any iron supplement with a 4-ounce serving of orange juice.