

Iron, Functions and Sources

Many diets are iron deficient...

High school age and college age girls who appear pale, listless and tired may be suffering from a malady called iron deficiency anemia. This anemia can be caused by a lack of iron in their diets or by a loss of blood in illness or injury.

While young women are especially susceptible to iron deficiencies, many school age children also have diets that are low in this important mineral. Iron helps your build red blood cells by producing a substance called hemoglobin.

Iron is an important element in diet...

To prevent this shortage of iron and the tired feeling it causes, it's important that these people should eat enough of the foods which contain iron. Generally, foods containing iron come from the more colorful foods of three food groups. Red meats such as beef, pork, veal and lamb are good sources of iron. Liver is perhaps one of the best sources of iron... but it's really not that popular with many people. Perhaps you can work it into your diet or your family's diet by cooking it several different ways. You might try frying it or grinding it and mixing it with ground beef, or chopping it and putting it in meat sauces or with liver spreads.

To help your body absorb more of the iron you get in food you can eat some kind of food high in vitamin C such as orange juice along with the iron-rich food.



Other sources of iron...

You will find that egg yolks and dry beans are also good sources for iron.

If you're looking for iron in vegetables you should try the dark green ones like chard, spinach, endive, mustard and turnip greens. Collards, kale, and broccoli supply iron, but contain less than the other dark green vegetables. Dried fruits are good sources of iron, these include: prunes, apricots, dates, figs, peaches and raisins. Whole grain and enriched breads and cereals are good sources of iron. Iron is one of the nutrients used in the enrichment process of these foods.

To help your body absorb more of the iron you get in food you can eat some kind of food high in vitamin C such as orange juice along with the iron-rich food. An example might be a glass of tomato juice with a fresh spinach salad. Another good combination is orange juice with an egg for breakfast. Not only will your body take in the iron, it will also absorb more of it.

For more information on iron functions and sources contact your local county Extension office.