

What is Hemoglobin?

Iron when combined with certain proteins becomes hemoglobin in the red blood cells. Iron is present in small amounts in the body. Its function is to carry oxygen to the body's tissue. Because oxygen helps convert food into energy, too little iron- and hemoglobin – can trigger an internal energy crisis.

The average adult requires 10 mg of iron daily, while the average adult female requires 18 mg a day. Iron is especially important in a woman's diet because her monthly loss of hemoglobin depletes her body's iron supply. Half of all women of childbearing age get less iron than the recommended daily allowance, and 5% suffer from iron deficient anemia.

Iron and your diet

Iron rich foods help to promote blood regeneration. Liver, one of the best sources of iron, should be included in the diet once a week. Lean meats, eggs, whole grain and enriched breads, cereals and potatoes are good food sources of iron. Other foods valuable for their iron content include green leafy vegetables, dried fruits, legumes (peas, beans, lentils) and molasses. Foods poor in iron generally have a noticeable lack of pigment. With a few exceptions, such as the potato and enriched white bread. It may be helpful to remember that while foods are not good builders of red blood cells.

You can increase the amount of iron your body absorbs by eating foods high in vitamin C along with ones rich in iron. People who suffer from anemia should avoid drinking tea and coffee. Studies show that tea reduces iron absorption by as much as 87% when consumed with a meal. Tests of 37 people showed a decreased in absorption by 39% when coffee was consumed with a meal.

High Iron Foods

Beet greens	Enriched foods	sardines
Chard	Ham	scallops
Chicken	Iron fortified cereal	shrimp
Clams	liver	spinach
Dates	liver sausage	tuna
Dried apricots	meat, especially lean beef	turkey
Dried beans or peas	pork	veal
Dried peaches	molasses	whole germ
Dried prunes or prune juice	oysters	whole grain bread
Eggs	raisins	