

# IRON INFORMATION FOR BLOOD DONORS

Thank you for coming to donate blood today. We care about your health and want you to know that donating blood reduces iron stores in your body. Your body needs iron to make new red blood cells. Red blood cells deliver oxygen to all the tissues of the body through the actions of an iron-containing protein called hemoglobin. In many people, this reduction in iron levels is temporary and has no effect on their health. However in some individuals, particularly younger women and frequent donors of both genders, blood donation can cause or worsen iron deficiency and/or anemia (low red blood cells).

It's important to replace the iron lost between donations to maintain good health. It is recommended that all donors eat a well-balanced diet that includes foods rich in iron. Additionally, we recommend you consult your healthcare provider before taking extra iron in the form of vitamins with iron or iron supplements. The amount of iron you need will depend on various factors including your age, gender, and how often you donate blood. Taking too much iron may be harmful. It is also important to know that iron supplements may mask other serious health conditions. Please discuss with your healthcare provider whether you should have an exam before taking iron supplements. He or she can help you decide the best approach for you.



CEDARS-SINAI®

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Cedars-Sinai ■ Blood Donor Services

8700 Beverly Blvd., Suite 1690 ■ Los Angeles, CA 90048

Toll-Free: 1-877-71-BLOOD (1-877-712-5663) ■ [cedars-sinai.edu/donateblood](http://cedars-sinai.edu/donateblood)

# IRON RICH FOODS

Your body needs iron to manufacture healthy red blood cells, the cells that deliver oxygen from the lungs to all the tissues of the body. Iron is obtained from dietary sources, and it is recommended that men and post menopausal women consume 10 mg/day. During childbearing years women should ingest 15-18mg/day, to make up for iron lost through menstrual bleeding. Blood donors should pay special attention to eating iron-rich foods, and frequent blood donors (more than 2-3 units of blood/year) may want to consider taking a multivitamin with iron, or an iron supplement.

Iron is present in many different foods, so eating a varied and healthful diet is important. Vitamin C enhances the absorption of iron, and eating iron rich foods along with a source of vitamin C (citrus fruits and juices, etc) can help replenish your body's iron stores. Also, iron may be absorbed into foods that have been cooked in iron cookware.

Drinking coffee or tea with a meal can greatly decrease iron absorption, therefore it is best not to drink them within one hour of mealtime. Iron absorption can also be lowered by antacid use or a diet excessive in fiber. Dairy products such as cheese, cottage cheese, milk and yogurt, although rich in calcium, have negligible iron content. It is important to eat a variety of foods every day.

## Meats:

Canned Clams (3 oz)	23.8 mg
Oysters (3 oz)	13.2 mg
Shrimp (3 oz)	2.6 mg
Ground Beef (3 oz)	2.2 mg
Pork (3 oz)	2.7 mg
Veal or Lamb (3 oz)	3.0 mg
Beef Liver (3 oz)	5.2 mg
Chicken Liver (3 oz)	10.8 mg
Fish, Tuna canned (3 oz)	1.3 mg
Chicken Breast (3 oz)	1.1 mg
Large Egg (1)	1.0 mg
Turkey, Dark Meat (3 oz)	2.0 mg
Turkey, Light Meat (3 oz)	1.1 mg
Veggie or Soy Burger (1 Patty)	2.9 mg

## Greens/Veggies:

Collards or Beet (½ Cup)	1.2 mg
Swiss Chard (½ Cup)	2.0 mg
Spinach (½ Cup) cooked or (1 Cup) raw	3.0 mg
Brussel sprouts (½ Cup)	2.0 mg
Beets, Canned (½ Cup)	1.5 mg
Mushrooms (½ Cup)	1.4 mg
Peas, Frozen (½ Cup)	1.2 mg
Potato, Baked with skin on (med)	1.9 mg
Sweet Potato, Baked with skin on (med)	1.1 mg
Sauerkraut, canned (½ Cup)	1.7 mg
Tomato Sauce (½ Cup)	1.3 mg

## Nuts:

Almonds or Pistachios (¼ Cup)	1.3 mg
Pine or cashews (1oz)	1.6 mg
Walnuts or mixed (1oz)	1.0 mg

## Beans: (½ Cup)

(Black, Pinto, Great Northern or Garbanzo)	1.6-1.8 mg
(Kidney, Lima, Navy, or Canned White)	2.6-3.9 mg
Soybeans (½ Cup)	4.4 mg
Tofu, Firm (½ Cup)	3.4 mg
Soy Milk (2 Cups)	2.7 mg

## Grains:

Lentils (½ Cup)	3.5 mg
Wheat Germ (2t)	1.1 mg
Enriched Egg Noodles (½ Cup)	1.2 mg
Pita (4 in. round)	1.0 mg
Pumpkin Seeds (1 oz)	4.2 mg
Cereal (½ Cup)	2-12 mg
Instant or Prepared Grits (½ Cup)	7.1 mg
Chex Mix (2/3 Cup)	7.0 mg
Cream of Wheat (½ Cup)	5.2 mg
Oatmeal (½ Cup)	
Instant fortified with iron	5.0 mg
Biscuit (4 in)	2.9 mg
English or Bran Muffin	2.3 mg
Bagel (4 in)	3.5-5.4 mg
Pretzels (2 oz)	3.1 mg



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