

SAMPLE ONE-DAY MENU

Breakfast	Item	Iron (mg)
	1 small orange	0.2
	3/4-cup total Raisin Bran cereal	18
	1 egg	1
	1 slice whole wheat toast	1
	1 teaspoon butter/margarine	
Lunch	1-cup fat-free or low-fat milk	<.01
	1-cup tuna salad	2
	2 slices whole wheat bread	2
	1/2-cup carrots	0.5
	1 medium apple	0.3
	1/2-cup orange juice (fortified with calcium & vitamin D)	0.1
Dinner	3-oz baked chicken breast	1.1
	1 medium Russet potato baked with skin, with 1/4-cup shredded cheddar cheese	2.1
	1 1/2-cups mixed salad (includes 1-cup spinach) with 1/4-cup dried cranberries	3.1
	1 teaspoon olive oil and vinegar dressing	
Snack	1/2-cup low-fat yogurt with 1.5-oz. trail mix (contains nuts, seeds, chocolate chips)	1.49
Totals		32.89

REFERENCES

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WHY IS YOUR IRON IMPORTANT?

Strengthening Your Blood



WHAT IS IRON?

Iron helps oxygen flow throughout your body. It is an essential part of many proteins and enzymes that help your body maintain good health and positive energy. Without an iron-rich diet, there may not be enough red blood cells to help your health or patients in need of a transfusion.

HOW MUCH IRON IS ENOUGH IRON?

- Women (ages 19-50): 18 mg per day
- Men (ages 19 and up): 8 mg per day
- Women (ages 51 and up): 8 mg per day

SEARCHING FOR IRON

There are two types of iron in foods:

- Heme Iron – from animal sources such as meat, poultry and fish.
- Non-heme Iron – from plant sources like vegetables, fruits, breads, cereals, eggs and nuts.

Note: How well your body absorbs non-heme iron depends on what else you're eating. Some foods increase absorption, while others interfere.

IMPROVE YOUR IRON ABSORPTION

A well balanced diet along with exercise is needed for healthy living. The following suggestions should serve only as a guideline for those experiencing issues with absorbing iron. In any case, it is highly recommended you consult with your physician to determine what is best for you.

Pairing heme iron with non-heme iron foods will improve your uptake (i.e. chicken breast with a side of broccoli).

Essential vitamins can also help (i.e. Vitamin C, Vitamin B and Folate). When eating non-heme sources, follow these tips to improve your absorption, but please consult with your physician to determine what is best for you.



- Eat beef, poultry, fish and veal as sources of heme iron
- Eat citrus, berries, cabbage, tomatoes and peppers as sources of non-heme iron and Vitamin C
- Eat raisins, beans and liver as a source of Folate
- Eat green vegetables, such as broccoli and spinach as sources of non-heme iron and Vitamin B
- If recommended by your doctor, iron supplements are also acceptable
- Limit your intake of dairy products such as cheese, yogurt or milk
- Limit your intake of eggs, whole-grain breads and cereals, baked goods or candy bars
- Limit your intake of tea, coffee, wine, beer or soft drinks
- Limit your intake of canned or processed foods containing EDTA

TIPS FOR ADDING IRON TO YOUR EATING PLAN

- Eat lean meat, fish and poultry regularly - at least three times per week
- Eat enriched grain products and fortified cereals
- Add dried beans, peas and lentils along with vegetables high in vitamin C to soups and casseroles
- Add dried fruits to cereals and salads (for example add raisins to oatmeal or dried cranberries to salads)
- Add dried fruits in baking
- Sprinkle wheat germ on cereal or use in baking or preparing casseroles

Often diet alone will not maintain iron stores. Persons, especially women of child bearing age and young adults, making regular blood donations may need to take an iron supplement in order to replenish iron stores and may want to discuss iron supplementation with their physicians

HEME IRON (easier to absorb)

Food	Serving Size	Iron (mg)
Beef, veal	3 oz.	3
Beef, ground	3 oz.	2.2
Beef tenderloin	3 oz.	3
Turkey, dark meat	3 oz.	2
Fish, halibut	1/2 filet	1.8
Chicken, leg meat	3 oz.	1.7
Chicken, breast	3 oz.	1.1
Tuna Salad	1 cup	2
Scallops	6	2

Other sources of heme iron: clams, shrimp, lamb, pork, liver, oysters, sardines.

NON-HEME IRON (harder to absorb)

Food	Serving Size	Iron (mg)
100% iron-fortified whole grain cereal (Total, Bran Flakes, GrapeNuts)	3/4 cup	18
Cheerios	1 cup	9.5
Grits, instant	1/2 cup	7.1
Bagel	1 four-inch diameter	5.4
Cream of Wheat	1/2 cup	5.2
Oatmeal, instant	1/2 cup	5
Seeds, pumpkin	1 oz.	4.2
Baked beans	1/3 cup	3
Spinach	1/2 cup cooked, 1 cup raw	3
Asparagus	6 spears	2
Trail Mix (nuts, seeds, chocolate chip)	1/2 cup	2.5
Vegetable/soy burger	1 patty	2.9
Potato, baked with skin	1 medium	1.9
Egg, substitute, liquid	1/4 cup	1.3
Egg, whole	1 large	1

Other sources of non-heme iron: beans, peas, lentils, rice, soy milk, pumpkin, noodles, greens (collard, turnip, mustard, kale, swiss chard), mushrooms, fortified bread products, whole wheat bread, tomatoes, tofu, wheat germ, nuts, seeds.