

Iron Rich Foods:

The best way to get iron is through your diet. There are two kinds of dietary iron: heme and non-heme. Heme iron, the easiest for your body to absorb, comes from animal sources (meat, poultry, and fish). Non-heme comes from plant sources and is as good quality, just a bit harder to absorb.

Heme sources (more or less in order of iron content):

- Clams, oysters and mussels
- Duck
- Beef and lamb
- Shrimp and fish
- Pork
- Turkey and chicken
- What about liver? In a word – yuck. Traditionally produced (not organic) liver is full of hormones and known carcinogens in levels far higher than other animal tissue. Many say that vitamin A levels in liver could be toxic to a growing fetus, though this is probably an exaggeration if one is eating it once a week or so.

Non-heme sources:

- Fortified/enriched cereals, rice, and breads
- Soy beans
- Lentils and beans
- Black strap molasses
- Pumpkin seeds
- Quinoa
- Tofu
- Spinach, chard and turnip greens
- Chickpeas
- Potato

- Beets
- Prune juice
- Tahini
- Cashews
- Acorn squash
- Raisins and dried apricots
- Almonds

Other measures:

- Combine heme and non-heme iron sources to increase absorption
- Combine with foods that are high in vitamin C: oranges, orange juice, strawberries, papayas, cantaloupe, tomatoes, tomato juice, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, green/red peppers
- Certain foods, like spinach, nuts and rhubarb are high in oxalic acid which decreases absorption (though it is broken down with cooking), so should be combined with a vitamin C rich food.
- Use a cast iron skillet
- Avoid combining coffee, tea, dairy and chocolate with iron sources
- Best absorbed on an empty stomach (but more likely to cause nausea)

- Avoid taking calcium supplements or antacids at same time

Supplementation:

- Teas, infusions, tinctures and supplements that can help:

Nettles

Red raspberry leaf tea

Dandelion greens

Yellow dock tincture

Wheat grass juice

Spirulina

Chlorophyll

Alfalfa

- Herbal liquids
- Floridix – a mixture of fruit concentrates, carrots, kelp, fennel, etc. is often enough and avoids some of the side effects of traditional ferrous sulfate supplements (constipation and nausea)
- Floravital – much the same as Floridix but without the yeast
- Herbal Iron (Natureworks) – similar herbal, fruit and vegetable blend
- Natrol liquid iron

Pill Supplementation:

- Many herbal formulations in a capsule

- Slow-Fe provides time released ferrous sulfate stated as reducing typical side effects
- Ferrous sulfate (pill or liquid) – most common and least expensive form. Typical dose is 325 mg 1-3 times a day
- Ferrous fumarate (pill or liquid) – many brands, more expensive than ferrous sulfate but has the most concentrated iron so less is needed. Typical dose is also 325 mg
- Ferrous gluconate (pill or liquid) – same dosage, less commonly found, least amount of elemental iron

For side effects of iron

supplementation:

- Constipation – drink LOTS of water – a GALLON a day, change type of supplement, eat prunes/figs/dates etc, take stool softener. Avoid taking bran close to iron supplementation
- Nausea – take with food, take at night, change type of supplement (consider herbal liquid, or time released capsule).