

Iron Content of Food

Food	Weight	Iron (mg)	Food	Weight	Iron (mg)
Beef (round), cooked	100g	2.6	Adzuki beans, cooked	1 cup (230g)	4.6
Pork (loin), cooked	100g	1.2	Almonds	1 oz. (28g)	1.0
Lamb (leg), cooked	100g	2.2	Cashew nuts	1 oz. (28g)	1.7
Chicken (thigh), cooked	100g	1.3	Sesame	1 Tbsp. (9g)	1.3
Dace, cooked	100g	0.9	Peanuts	1 oz. (28g)	1.2
Clams, cooked	100g	27.9	Raisins	0.5 cup (72g)	1.3
Oysters, cooked	100g	9.2	Apricots, dried	0.5 cup (65g)	1.7
Shrimps, cooked	100g	3.0	Date, dried	100g	2.3
Egg, boiled	1 piece (50g)	0.9	Spinach, cooked	1 cup (180g)	6.4
Soybeans, cooked	1 cup (172g)	8.8	Wood ear fungus (soaked in water)	100g	5.5
Red kidney beans, cooked	1 cup (171g)	5.0	Brown rice	1 cup (195g)	1.0
Garbanzo beans, cooked	1 cup (164g)	4.7	Oat bran, breakfast cereals	0.5 cup (40g)	1.8
Soybean milk film, dried	100g	16.5	Oats, cooked	1 cup (234g)	2.1

1 cup approx. 240ml



- Eating too much red meat (beef, pork and lamb, etc.) would increase the risk of colon cancer. It is suggested to eat less than 500g red meat (cooked) per week.
- Eat less foods that would hinder the iron absorption (e.g. tea, coffee, etc.) Take them 2 hours before or 1 hour after a meal if possible.
- Avoid taking iron supplement unless you are advised by the doctor. Excessive iron intake would affect the absorption of other minerals and over-accumulation of iron in your body would cause harmful effects.

Reference:

1. The Chinese Dietary Reference intakes (2013)
2. Centre for Food Safety Nutrient Information Inquiry System
3. Hong Kong Red Cross blood transfusion service
<http://www5.ha.org.hk/rcbts/UPFILE/BookFile/2017724175940245.pdf> (browsing date: Aug 2017)

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Function of Iron

The main function of iron is to produce heme in the body. Heme is an essential element of red blood cell and is responsible for transporting oxygen to various body tissues. Therefore, inadequate iron intake would cause the body to produce insufficient amount of red blood cells, leading to iron deficiency anaemia.

The Impact of Iron Deficiency Anaemia on the Body

Picky eating and inappropriate weight loss methods will cause inadequate iron intake. Due to periodical blood loss during menstruation, young female will have a higher chance of developing iron deficiency than male. People with iron deficiency anaemia tend to be pale, tired and unable to concentrate on their study. Other symptoms include dizziness, poor appetite and weakened immune system.



Prevention

In order to prevent iron deficiency anaemia, it is essential to develop a healthy dietary habit and eat according to the “Healthy Eating Food Pyramid”. One should also learn to choose iron-rich food. The suggested daily requirement of iron is as below:

Age	Suggested daily requirements(mg)	
	Male	Female
4-6	10	10
7-10	13	13
11-13	15	18
14-17	16	18
18-49	12	20

Iron-rich Food

1. Meat and seafood
 - Beef, pork, lamb, etc.
 - Oyster, shrimp, clam, etc.
2. Egg, dried beans and its products
 - Egg
 - Soybeans, red kidney beans, soybean milk film, etc.
3. Dried fruits
 - Raisins, dried apricots, etc.
4. Nuts, seeds
 - Almonds, sesame, peanuts, cashew nuts, etc.
5. Vegetables
 - Spinach, wood ear fungus etc.
6. Grains
 - Brown rice, oats, etc.
 - Breakfast cereals fortified with iron



Since vitamin C helps enhance the iron absorption of plant-source food, when you are having these iron-rich food, you should also eat some food rich in vitamin C, e.g. orange, mandarin orange, kiwi fruit, tomatoes, broccoli, etc.

Suggested Menu:

Whole-wheat bread with peanut butter + fresh orange juice

Mixed vegetables stew with soybean milk film + stir-fried broccoli