



Are you getting enough iron?

Practical tips to ensure you are getting enough iron



Are you low in iron?



If you lack energy you may be low in iron. Symptoms of iron deficiency are subtle and can be mistaken for a busy lifestyle.

If you have any of these symptoms, see your doctor:

- Tiredness (even after rest)
- Lack of energy
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Frequent infections
- Feeling down

Why do you need iron?

Iron is used by the body to carry oxygen in the blood.

iron



healthy growth & brain development

for babies, toddlers and children to grow and develop normally



wellbeing

to produce energy from food



immunity

for a healthy immune system

Are you at risk?



Women of childbearing age are at risk of iron deficiency.

Iron deficiency is more common in women who:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have heavy periods
- Don't eat much meat



What is the role of supplements?

The best way to prevent iron deficiency is to eat iron-rich foods regularly.

If you are iron deficient, your doctor may prescribe an iron supplement to help your iron levels return to normal.

Most people find that once their iron levels have returned to normal, they no longer require supplements. Eating an iron-rich diet will help to maintain healthy iron levels.

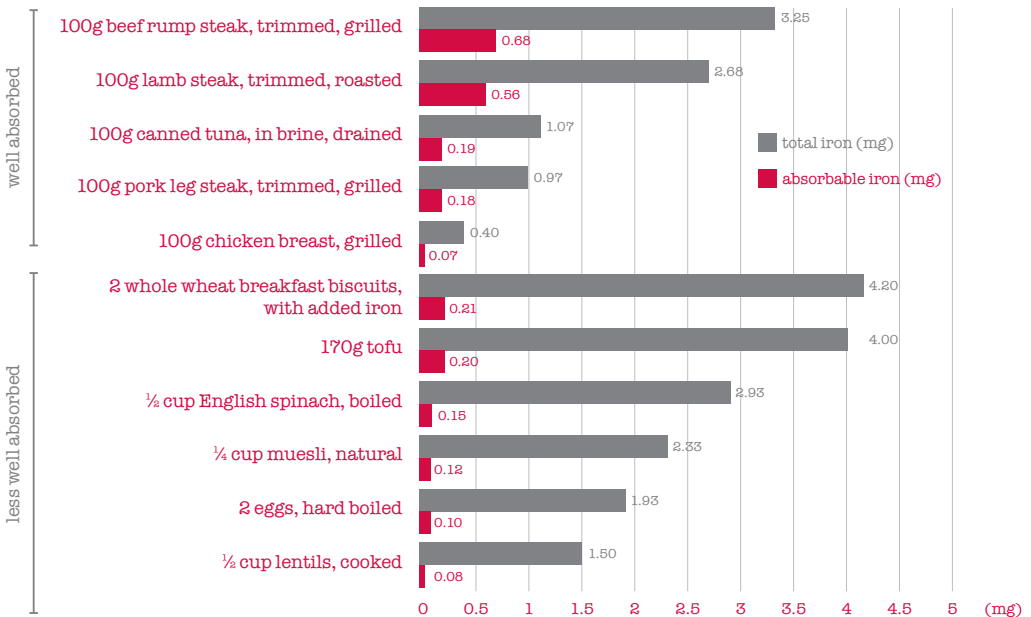


Which foods contain iron?

There are a number of foods that are high in iron, but the iron in these foods isn't absorbed by the body in the same way.

Iron found in beef, lamb, fish, pork and chicken is well absorbed by the body, whereas iron found in cereals with added iron, tofu, spinach, eggs and legumes is less well absorbed by the body.

The amount of iron you need depends on the type of foods you choose (see graph).



The best sources of iron are beef and lamb as they are high in well absorbed iron. Eating an iron-rich diet which includes 130g of cooked* beef or lamb every second day is recommended in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

- **Beef and lamb contain double the iron in pork, chicken and fish**
- **The redder the meat, the more iron it contains**

*200g raw weight = 130g cooked weight





3 easy steps to an iron-rich diet

1: Eat iron-rich foods, including beef and lamb 3 to 4 times a week to meet iron and zinc needs

week 1	monday 	tuesday	wednesday 	thursday	friday 	saturday	sunday 
week 2	monday	tuesday 	wednesday	thursday 	friday	saturday 	sunday

Foods high in iron are also high in zinc, important for growth, development and immunity.

2: When having a meal without beef, lamb, pork, chicken or fish, add a vitamin C-rich food. This will increase the amount of iron absorbed from the meal

iron-rich plant foods +  5 strawberries or  half orange or  medium tomato or  3 broccoli florets = increased iron absorption

3: If you drink tea, coffee or cola, have them between meals as they decrease the amount of iron absorbed from the meal



Iron-rich meal ideas

breakfast

Wheat bran flake cereal (30g), reduced fat milk (½ cup) and mixed berries (150g)

total iron: 5.72mg
absorbable iron: 0.57mg



Baked beans (½ cup), wholemeal toast (2 pieces) and a kiwifruit

total iron: 4.19mg
absorbable iron: 0.42mg

lunch

Asian beef (100g cooked) salad

total iron: 6.0mg
absorbable iron: 0.9mg



Roast lamb (100g cooked) and salad wrap

total iron: 6.11mg
absorbable iron: 1.07mg

dinner

Wholemeal spaghetti bolognese (200g raw mince/serve)

total iron: 8.61mg
absorbable iron: 1.55mg



Lentil burger pattie (1 cup canned lentils/serve) with tomato (1) on a wholemeal bun

total iron: 7.52mg
absorbable iron: 0.75mg



Add a vitamin C-rich food to meals without meat to increase the amount of iron absorbed from the meal



Poached eggs (2 eggs), wholemeal toast (2 pieces), cooked tomato (½ whole), cooked spinach (½ cup) and orange juice (½ cup)

total iron: 6.25mg
absorbable iron: 0.63mg



Canned tuna (90g) and veggie pasta salad

total iron: 4.32mg
absorbable iron: 0.67mg



Lamb casserole (200g raw lamb/serve) with sweet potato

total iron: 7.02mg
absorbable iron: 1.26mg



Beef san choy bow



prep time: 15 mins
cook time: 15 mins



ingredients

500g lean beef mince
2 tbsp canola oil
200g mushrooms, sliced
2 carrots, cut into matchsticks
200g snow peas, sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp ginger, grated
2 tbsp oyster sauce
2 tsp salt-reduced soy sauce
8 iceberg lettuce cups,
sliced spring onions,
sliced deseeded long
red chilli (optional) and
coriander leaves, to serve

method

1. Heat a large wok over high heat. Add 2 tsp of the oil and half of the beef and cook, stirring for 4-5 minutes or until browned and excess liquid has evaporated. Transfer the cooked beef to a bowl and repeat with 2 tsp of the oil and the remaining beef. Remove from wok.
2. Add 2 tsp of the oil and the mushrooms to the wok and stir fry for 2 minutes. Remove from wok.
3. Add the remaining 2 tsp of oil, carrots and snow peas to the wok and stir fry for 1 minute. Add the ginger and garlic and stir fry for a further minute. Add the cooked beef, mushrooms, oyster sauce and soy sauce and cook for another minute, stirring well to combine.
4. Serve in iceberg lettuce cups, topped with sliced spring onions, sliced deseeded chilli and coriander leaves.

ALTERNATIVE: Add other vegetables to the san choy bow depending on what you have in the fridge e.g. capsicum, green beans.

Beef salad with watermelon, cucumber & mint



prep time: 25 mins
+ resting
cook time: 25 mins



ingredients

4 x 200g beef rump steaks,
trimmed of fat
100g (½ cup) brown rice
3 cloves garlic
4 long red chillies (optional),
seeded, roughly chopped
1 tbsp fish sauce
4 tbsp lime juice
1 cup loosely packed coriander
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp olive oil
1kg seedless watermelon, rind
removed, cut into small wedges
1 cucumber, sliced
2 green onions, sliced
1 cup loosely packed mint
80g Asian salad mix

method

1. Take beef out of the fridge to bring it to room temperature.
2. Cook rice in a small saucepan of boiling water for 25 minutes or until cooked. Drain and evenly spread over a large plate and refrigerate until cooled completely.
3. To make dressing, process garlic, chillies, fish sauce, lime juice, coriander and sugar in a food processor until finely chopped and combined.
4. Brush beef steaks with oil and cook on high on a barbecue or chargrill plan until cooked to your liking. Remove from heat, cover with foil and allow to rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Transfer sliced beef to a small bowl, add one-third of the dressing and toss well to combine.
5. Place watermelon, cucumber, green onions, mint, Asian salad mix and rice and the remaining dressing in a large bowl and toss well to combine.
6. Serve beef steaks with salad.

ALTERNATIVE: Asian salad mix is available from supermarkets. If you like, substitute with your favourite lettuce combination.

Beef casserole with red wine



prep time: 10 mins
cook time: 2h 15m



ingredients

800g chuck steak,
trimmed of fat and diced
2 tbsp plain flour
2 tbsp olive oil
1 brown onion, sliced
2 carrots, cut into large
pieces
200g mushrooms, quartered
1 cup red wine*
2 cups salt-reduced beef stock
2 zucchini, cut into large
pieces

Mashed potato, lemon zest
and chopped parsley to serve

*Red wine can be replaced with 2
tbsp balsamic vinegar & 1 cup water

method

1. Place beef in a bowl and toss in flour. Preheat oven to 170°C
2. Add 2 tsp of oil to a large casserole dish over high heat, add half the beef and cook until browned on both sides. Remove from casserole dish and repeat process with 2 tsp oil and remaining beef. Set aside.
3. Add the remaining oil and the onion, carrot and mushrooms to the casserole dish. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes or until lightly coloured. Add the red wine, beef stock and beef to the dish and bring to the boil.
4. Cover and cook in the oven for 2 hours or until the meat is tender. Add the zucchini for the final 20 minutes of cooking time.
5. Serve with mashed potato, lemon zest and parsley.

ALTERNATIVE: Make shepherds pie by placing leftover casserole into an ovenproof dish and topping with sweet potato or potato mash. Cook until potato has browned and filling is piping hot.

Dukkah spiced lamb with rocket & feta salad



prep time: 10 mins
cook time: 1 hour



ingredients

800g lamb leg steaks,
trimmed of fat

1½ tbsp olive oil

4 tbsp dukkah

150g rocket leaves

1 avocado, sliced

75g reduced fat

feta cheese, crumbled

Juice of half a lemon

Roasted sweet potato and
pumpkin, to serve

method

1. Brush the lamb with 2 tsp of the oil and cook on high on a barbecue or chargrill pan until cooked to your liking. Remove from the heat, cover with foil and allow to rest for 10 minutes.
2. Toss rested lamb steaks in dukkah ensuring an even coating on both sides.
3. Place the rocket, avocado, feta, and remaining oil in a large bowl and toss to combine. Add lemon juice to taste.
4. Serve the lamb steaks with the rocket and feta salad and roasted sweet potato and pumpkin.

ALTERNATIVE: Substitute dukkah for a spice mix. Dukkah is an Egyptian nut based spice blend. You can find it in delis or the spice section of bigger supermarkets.

This brochure has been produced by Meat & Livestock Australia and the information has been independently reviewed by the following organisations.



Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is a producer owned company that delivers marketing and research services for Australia's cattle, sheep and goat industries. MLA provides health professionals and consumers with accurate nutrition information about the role of red meat as part of a healthy balanced diet. Locked bag 991 North Sydney NSW 2059. www.beefandlamb.com.au



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Lean red meat trimmed of all visible fat has less than 4% saturated fat and earns the Heart Foundation Tick of approval. For more information on the Tick Program, visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/tick. Tick TM used under licence.

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