

Iron in food

Good iron sources

Food	Iron (mg)
2 Weetbix	3
100 g sardines	3
100 g firm tofu	2.5
½ cup cooked Asian greens	2.5
100 g cooked beef	2.5
½ cup kidney beans	2
½ cup cooked lentils	2
1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds	1.8
1 tablespoon chicken liver pate	1.6
100 g grilled salmon	1.2
20 almonds	1
1 cup raw spinach/ silverbeet	1
1 egg	1

Note: plants are a good source of iron, but they are less well-absorbed by the body than animal sources.

To increase iron absorption from food

- Eat with a good source of vitamin C eg. Berries, citrus, capsicum, kiwi fruit, tomato
- Eat with a little meat. Even a small amount of meat can increase the amount of iron absorbed from all the foods in a meal (meat and non-meat iron sources).
- Avoid drinking tea, coffee or wine at the same time as eating these foods. The tannins in them decrease iron absorption

How much iron do I need each day?

Age	Women (mg/ day)	Men (mg/ day)
19-30	18	8
31-50	18	8
51-70	8	8
70+	8	8

This is the recommended daily intake for the average person. You may need more or less than this.

Iron supplements

Iron supplements are an effective way to increase iron and may be necessary for people with low iron or anaemia. Iron supplements can cause constipation. Try these tips to manage it:

- **Fibre:** eat more fibre-rich foods eg. wholegrains and cereals, fruit and vegetables
- **Water:** drink plenty of fluids (mostly water) ESPECIALLY if increasing fibre in the diet. Increasing fibre without increasing fluids can make constipation worse
- **Exercise:** gentle exercise and movement can help get the gut moving