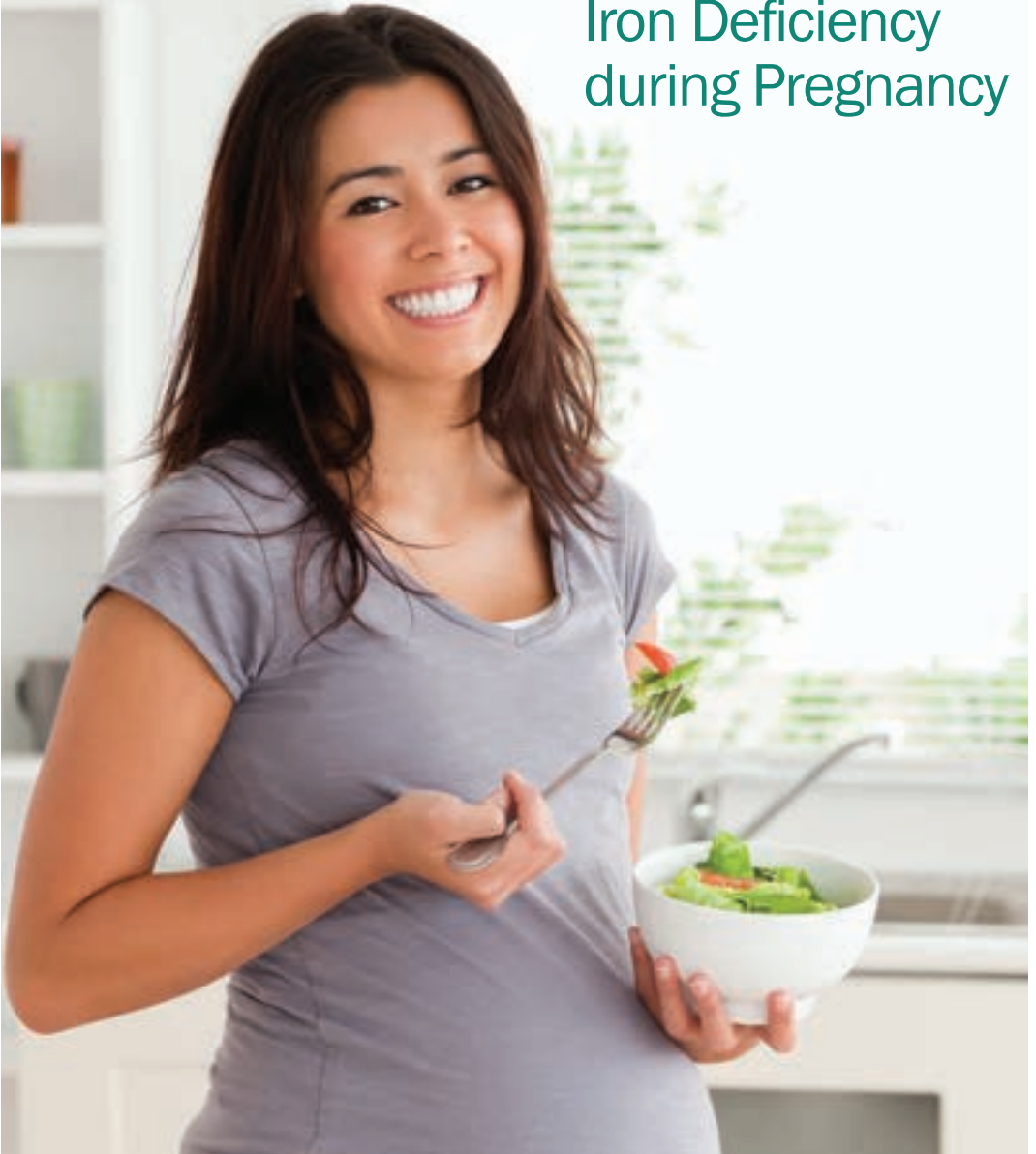


## Iron Deficiency during Pregnancy





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### Why is iron important during pregnancy?

Many women develop iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy. Your body uses iron to make extra blood (hemoglobin) for you and your baby during pregnancy.

Iron also helps move oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body and to your baby. Getting enough iron can prevent a condition of too few red blood cells that can make you feel tired, called iron deficiency anemia.

### What are symptoms of low iron during pregnancy?

The following symptoms may occur if you are not getting enough iron from your diet:

- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Cold hands
- Increased heart rate
- Irritability
- Pale skin
- Decreased concentration
- Decreased immune function (which makes it harder for you to fight off illness)

### How much iron does your body needs during pregnancy?

Women aged 19-50 need 27 mg of iron per day during pregnancy.

### How can I get enough iron from food?

Although iron deficiency is common in pregnant women, it can be avoided with careful food planning. Iron is naturally found in many foods and is fortified in many food products.



Examples of iron-rich foods you can include in your regular diet:

Food	Serving size	Iron (mg)
<b>Vegetables and Fruits</b>		
Spinach, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	2.0-3.4
Potato, with skin, cooked	1 medium	1.3-1.9
Turnip or beet greens, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.5-1.7
Prune juice	125 mL (½ cup)	1.6
Apricots, dried	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.6
Green peas, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
Tomato sauce	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
<b>Cereals and Grains</b>		
Oatmeal, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.5-6.6

Cereal, dry, all types	30 g	4.0-4.3
Oat bran cereal, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.0
Pasta, egg noodles, enriched, cooked	125 mL (½ cup)	1.3
<b>Meat and Poultry*</b>		
Beef, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4-3.3
Ground meat (beef, lamb), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.3-2.2
Lamb, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.3-2.1
Chicken, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.4-2.0
Ground meat (turkey, chicken), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.8-1.2
Turkey, various cuts, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	0.3-0.8
<b>Organ Meats*</b>		
Liver (chicken, lamb), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	6.2-9.7
Liver, beef, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	4.9
<b>Fish and Seafood*</b>		
Octopus, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	7.2
Oysters, cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	3.3-9.0
Seafood (shrimp, scallops, crab), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.2-2.3
Sardines, canned	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.7-2.2
Clams, canned	75 g (2 ½ oz)	2.0
Fish (mackerel, trout, bass), cooked	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.4-1.7
Tuna, light, canned in water	75 g (2 ½ oz)	1.2
<b>Meat Substitutes</b>		
Tofu, cooked	150 g (¾ cup)	2.4-8.0

Soybeans, mature, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	6.5
Lentils, cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	4.1-4.9
Beans (kidney, pinto, black), cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	2.6-4.9
Pumpkin or squash seeds, roasted	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.4-4.7
Peas (chickpeas, black-eyed, split), cooked	175 mL (¾ cup)	1.9-3.5
Tempeh/fermented soy product, cooked	150 g (¾ cup)	3.2
Nuts (cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia, pistachio nuts)	60 ml (¼ cup)	1.3-2.2
Eggs, cooked	2 large	1.2-1.8
Sesame seeds, roasted	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	1.4
Hummus	60 mL (¼ cup)	1.4
Nut butter (peanut, almond)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	0.6-1.2
<b>Other Foods</b>		
Blackstrap molasses	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	3.6
Yeast extract spread (marmite or vegemite)	30 mL (2 Tbsp)	1.4

**\*Important Concerns:**

- Make sure all meats are properly cooked: veal, lamb, beef, fish, shellfish to 145°F/63°C; ground meat to 160°F/71°C
- Avoid fish with high mercury content (swordfish, shark, king mackerel, tilefish) and limit tuna to 170 grams per week
- Limit liver to no more than 75 grams (2 ½ oz, or about 5 tablespoons) per week. If you have any questions about this list of foods, please talk to your doctor or dietitian



### How is iron absorbed in the body?

Food may affect the amount of iron that is absorbed by the body. Some foods can help your body absorb more iron, while other foods can decrease absorption.

Iron found in animal foods is easily absorbed, but the iron found in plant foods is not absorbed as easily. Iron absorption from plant foods can be increased when you consume foods high in vitamin C. Combine these foods with iron-rich foods to increase your iron absorption.

Some food /drinks prevent the absorption of iron such as tea and dairy products. To avoid this, you need to wait for 2 hours after your meal before you can take iron.

### What foods are good sources of vitamin C?

Some fruits and vegetables are a good source of vitamin C. See the list below for the best sources:

- Juices - orange, tomatoes, grapefruit
- Fruit - oranges, strawberries, kiwi
- Vegetables - broccoli, potatoes, bell peppers (capsicum), tomato (tomato sauces)

