

Sources of iron

Iron is a trace mineral that is needed to make haemoglobin, a protein that transports oxygen around the body. It is required for energy production, red blood cell health, immune function, brain health, hormone synthesis and connective tissue formation.

Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) for iron



19+ male
8 mg/day



19+ female
18 mg/day



Pregnancy
27 mg/day



Lactation
9 mg/day



Food (serving size)	Iron (mg)
Lamb liver, grilled (100g)	11.0
Lentils, cooked (198g, 1 cup)	6.6
Beans, white, cooked (170g, 1 cup)	6.6
Spinach, cooked (225g, 1 cup)	6.4
Breakfast cereals, iron fortified (30g, 1 cup)	1 - 5
Oyster, Pacific, aquacultured, raw (100g)	4.4
Kangaroo, loin fillet, grilled (100g)	4.1
Lamb, lean, cooked (100g)	3.7
Oats, rolled, uncooked (100g, 1 cup)	3.5
Beef, steak, lean, cooked (100g)	3.3
Sardines, canned in oil (110g, 1 tin)	3.2
Apricots, dried (100g, ½ cup)	3.1
Pumpkin seed, hulled, dried (30g, ¼ cup)	3.0
Tofu, firm, raw (100g)	2.9
Quinoa, cooked (185g, 1 cup)	2.8
Chinese cabbage, pak-choi, shredded, boiled (170g, 1 cup)	1.8
Chickpeas, canned, drained (100g)	1.8
Potato, with skin, baked (1 medium)	1.8
Cashew nuts, roasted or raw (30g, ¼ cup)	1.5
Tuna, canned in brine (95g, 1 tin)	1.1
Eggs, hard-boiled (1 large)	1.1
Asparagus, green, raw (100g, ¾ cup)	1.0
Broccoli, cooked (156g, 1 cup)	1.0
Chicken thigh, lean flesh, cooked (100g)	0.9
Lentils, cooked (198g, 1 cup)	6.6
Beans, white, cooked (170g, 1 cup)	6.6

- Non-haem iron (from plants such as legumes & whole grains) contain phytates that inhibit iron absorption. Other inhibitors include coffee, black tea, soy protein and calcium. Vitamin C enhances non-haem iron absorption.
- Haem iron (from animals) is absorbed by the body about ten times more easily than non-haem iron.