

Pump Up Your Iron!

Diet suggestions to help increase iron and hemoglobin levels

Foods High In Iron:

- ♥ Eggs, lean beef and pork, turkey and chicken, liver
- ♥ Fish, (tuna, salmon) and shellfish (clams, oysters, shrimp)
- ♥ Vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, peas, kale, and baked potatoes
- ♥ Beans and lentils (kidney and Lima beans)
- ♥ Nuts (almonds) and seeds (pumpkin seeds, sesame)
- ♥ Enriched grains such as brown rice, oatmeal, and cream of wheat.
- ♥ Dried fruits (prunes, dates, figs, apricots, and raisins)

Foods that may help:

Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron and should be consumed at the same time as high-iron foods.

- ✓ Oranges/orange juice, tangerines, and grapefruit
- ✓ Strawberries, papayas, kiwi fruit, mango, and cantaloupe
- ✓ Green and red peppers
- ✓ Vitamin C supplements

Foods that may hinder:

Some foods limit your absorption of iron. You should **avoid** eating these foods at the same time as iron-rich foods, or eat them at least two hours before or after the iron-rich meal.

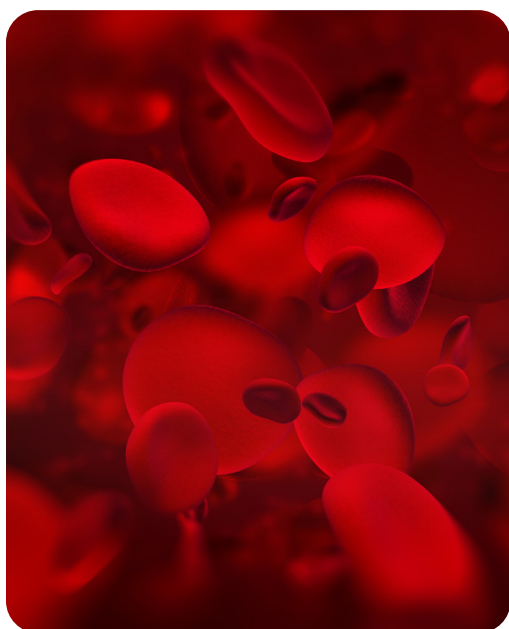
- ✗ Coffee, cocoa, and other caffeinated drinks
- ✗ Black and green tea
- ✗ Soy products
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages

This information is provided solely as a resource and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice.

Facts about

Low Iron/Hemoglobin

Low iron (or hemoglobin level) is the most common reason for temporary deferral. A deferral as a blood donor because of a low hemoglobin level does not necessarily mean that you are anemic or cannot donate in the future. In fact, in most cases, all you need to increase your hemoglobin level is a simple change in your diet!



What is iron and hemoglobin?

The Blood Center measures each donor's hemoglobin level, the iron-containing protein found in red blood cells that bind to oxygen. Red blood cells transport oxygen through the bloodstream to all parts of the body. Hemoglobin correlates to the amount of iron in your blood. If your iron levels are low, your hemoglobin is low as well.

Donors must maintain adequate iron levels so that the drop in red blood cells that accompanies a blood donation does not compromise the body's normal function of hemoglobin oxygen transport.

Iron levels in the body

Every person is unique in the demands they put on their bodies and the way in which their bodies respond. For example, people who menstruate have increased daily iron needs due to losing blood each month during menstruation.

Between donations, you can help your body build and replenish its iron supply by adding more iron-rich foods to your diet. If desired, you may talk to your doctor about iron supplements or other options.



TheBloodCenter.org



(800) 86-BLOOD