



foodwise

Iron

FACT Teenagers, especially females, vegetarians and athletes, are at risk of low iron levels.

Why worry about iron?

Iron is essential for healthy blood. It is needed to transport oxygen around the body. It gives you energy and keeps your immune system strong and healthy. Low iron levels can make you feel tired and make you more prone to illness and infection.

How much iron?

AGE	IRON (mg/day)
Girls 12–13 years	8
Boys 12–13 years	8
Girls 14–18 years	15
Boys 14–18 years	11



Where do I get it?

There are two main types of iron – haem iron and non-haem iron. Choose a range of iron rich foods from both of these groups everyday.



Haem iron

- Found in animal foods such as red meat, pork, chicken and fish
- The iron in animal foods is better absorbed than the iron in plant foods.

Non-haem iron

- Found in plant foods such as wholegrain breads and cereals, legumes, nuts and green leafy vegetables (e.g. spinach, broccoli)
- Eat with a vitamin C rich food to increase absorption (e.g. oranges, berries, rockmelon, broccoli, tomato).



Iron

Sources of iron

FOOD	IRON (mg)
100g red meat (beef/lamb)	2–3
100g white meat (chicken)	1
100g white fish fillet	0.5
100g salmon/tuna	1.0
1 large egg*	1.0
150g tofu*	2–4
1 tbs Milo™*	6.0
½ cup nuts*	1.5–3.5
150g baked beans*	1.5
4 Weetbix™*	6.0
2 slices wholegrain bread*	1.8
100g spinach*	3.0

Note. *Increase iron absorption from these by including a vitamin C rich food.



Ways to increase iron intake

Breakfast

- Iron fortified breakfast cereals
- Wholegrain toast with peanut butter
- Baked beans
- Poached egg on toast
- Include some fruit for vitamin C.



Lunch

- Include an iron containing protein food, e.g. sandwich meat, tuna, salmon, egg, legumes or tofu
- Serve with salad/vegetables.



Dinner

- Include an iron containing protein food, e.g. red meat, chicken, fish, legumes (kidney beans, chickpeas)
- Serve with salad/vegetables



Snacks

- Milo™ and milk
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Wholegrain crackers with hummus.



Where can I find out more information?

HERE ARE 3 WAYS:

1. **TALK** to your GP
2. **MAKE A FREE APPOINTMENT** with an ACT Health Community Dietitian by phoning **6207 9977**
3. **CHECK OUT** more Foodwise factsheets at www.health.act.gov.au



The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.

Enquiries about this publication should be directed to ACT Health, Communications and Marketing Unit, GPO Box 825 Canberra City ACT 2601 or email: HealthACT@act.gov.au © Australian Capital Territory, Australia, April 2014