



EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health



Pumping Iron (Into your Diet)

Let's talk iron and anemia! Perhaps your energy levels are low, you have been feeling dizzy and weak, or maybe even caught yourself daydreaming about spinach? If this sounds familiar, you may be lacking iron. Although most Americans get adequate amounts of iron from their diet, some groups are at risk for consuming insufficient amounts. A lack of iron intake over time can lead to iron deficiency anemia, which occurs when your body doesn't have enough iron to produce hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the part of red blood cells that carries oxygenated blood throughout your body. Read along to *iron* out the facts about this mighty mineral and speak with your Healthcare Provider if you are concerned about your iron intake.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR IRON DEFICIENCY ANEMIA?

- **People who menstruate.** Those with heavy periods tend to lose more blood, and therefore iron, during menstruation.
- **Inadequate iron intake in the diet.** Your body regularly gets iron from the foods you eat. If you consume too little iron, over time your body can become deficient.
- **Poorly planned vegan/vegetarian diets.** If not consuming enough plant-based iron-rich foods, those who don't eat meat may have a greater risk of deficiency.
- **Frequent blood donors.** People who routinely donate blood may have an increased risk of iron deficiency anemia since blood donation can deplete iron stores.

FORMS

Iron from food comes in two forms: **heme** and **non-heme**. Heme is found only in animal foods like meat, poultry, and seafood. Non-heme iron is found in both plant and animal foods. Although your body absorbs heme iron more efficiently than non-heme, you can still meet your iron needs by following a well-balanced plant-based diet.

SOURCES

- Lean meats
- Seafood and shellfish
- Legumes
- Dark green leafy vegetables, like spinach
- Baked potato with skin
- Dried fruits
- Tofu
- Nuts and seeds
- Iron-fortified foods
- Peas

INCREASE ABSORPTION

Enhance **non-heme** iron absorption by pairing plant-based iron sources with foods rich in vitamin C. Try these powerful iron and vitamin C combos in the dining hall:

- Tofu stir fry with bell peppers
- Salad topped with chickpeas and a squeeze of lemon juice
- Spinach omelet with a side of orange slices

There is no denyin' you need your iron

Revised by: Holly Dorsett

Reviewed By: Marina Vineis, MS, RDN- Rutgers Dining Services

References: *Iron Consumer Fact Sheet*. Available at: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iron-Consumer/>. Accessed on: March 26, 2022. *Iron Deficiency Anemia* Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/iron-deficiency-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355034>. Accessed on: March 18, 2024. *Iron*. Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/iron/>. Accessed on: March 18, 2024

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