

## What Are the Symptoms of Iron-Deficiency Anemia?

- Fatigue    ▪ Weakness    ▪ Irritability
- Pale or dry skin    ▪ Loss of appetite
- Shortness of breath
- Sore tongue
- Brittle nails
- Headache – frontal
- Dizziness
- Weakness

**Note:** There may be no symptoms if anemia is mild.

## How Do I Increase My Iron Absorption?

- Eat foods high in iron (see back panel for more information about iron-rich foods)
- Eat vitamin C rich foods to help increase iron absorption
- Take iron supplements:
  - Ferrous Sulphate
  - Carbon Iron (Better tolerated-less indigestion and constipation associated)

## Foods High in Iron

Iron-Rich Foods	Quantity	Approximate Iron Content (milligrams)
Oysters	3 ounces	13.2
Beef liver	3 ounces	7.5
Prune juice	1/2 cup	5.2
Clams	2 ounces	4.2
Walnuts	1/2 cup	3.75
Ground beef	3 ounces	3.0
Chickpeas	1/2 cup	3.0
Bran flakes	1/2 cup	2.8
Pork roast	3 ounces	2.7
Cashew nuts	1/2 cup	2.65
Shrimp	3 ounces	2.6
Raisins	1/2 cup	2.55
Sardines	3 ounces	2.5
Spinach	1/2 cup	2.4
Lima beans	1/2 cup	2.3
Kidney beans	1/2 cup	2.2
Turkey, dark meat	3 ounces	2.0
Prunes	1/2 cup	1.9
Roast beef	3 ounces	1.8
Green peas	1/2 cup	1.5
Peanuts	1/2 cup	1.5
Potato	1	1.1
Sweet potato	1/2 cup	1.0
Green beans	1/2 cup	1.0
Egg	1	1.0

# What Is Iron?



## What Is Iron Deficiency Anemia?

Scott & White Blood Center  
 Monday-Thursday: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
 Friday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

(254) 724-HERO or (877) 724-HERO  
[bloodcenter.sw.org](http://bloodcenter.sw.org)

## What Is Iron?

Iron is a mineral which is essential for humans. Iron is stored in the human body in varied amounts. The liver, spleen, and bone marrow are the main places iron is stored. When we use up these stores by not taking in enough iron or by losing iron, **Iron Deficiency Anemia** is the result.

## Who Is at Risk for Iron-Deficiency Anemia?

- Women of child-bearing age who have blood loss through menstruation
- People with a poor dietary intake of iron
- Vegetarians
- Elderly

## What Causes Iron-Deficiency Anemia?

- **Diets low in iron**  
Iron is obtained from foods in our diet; however, only 1 mg of iron is absorbed for every 10 to 20 mg of iron ingested. A person unable to have a balanced iron-rich diet may suffer from some degree of iron-deficiency anemia.
- **Body changes**  
An increased iron intake and increased red blood cell production is required when the body is going through changes such as growth spurts in children and adolescents, or during pregnancy and lactation.
- **Gastrointestinal tract abnormalities**  
Mal-absorption of iron is common after some forms of gastrointestinal surgeries. Most of the iron taken in by foods is absorbed in the upper small intestine. Any abnormalities in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract could alter iron absorption and result in iron-deficiency anemia.
- **Blood loss**  
Loss of blood can cause a decrease of iron and result in iron-deficiency anemia. Sources of blood loss may include GI bleeding, menstrual bleeding, or injury.

## What Is Iron Deficiency Anemia?

When a person doesn't have enough iron, it can lead to a condition known as iron deficiency anemia.

The body needs iron to make hemoglobin. If not enough iron is available, hemoglobin production is limited, which in turns affects the production of red blood cells. A decrease in the normal amount of hemoglobin and red blood cells circulating in the bloodstream is known as anemia. Because red blood cells are needed to carry oxygen throughout the body, anemia results in less oxygen reaching the cells and tissues, affecting their function.

Iron deficiency anemia doesn't develop immediately. Instead, a person progresses through stages of iron deficiency, beginning with iron depletion, in which the amount of iron in the body is reduced but the amount of iron in the red blood cells remains constant. If iron depletion isn't corrected, it progresses to iron deficiency, eventually leading to iron-deficiency anemia.