



NUTRITION KEYNOTES

Increase Your Iron Intake

Goal: To eat more foods with iron and absorb iron from foods better.

Eat More Iron-Rich Foods

Include one or more of these foods with every meal:

- Lean red meat, liver*, kidney*, heart*, eggs*, dark meat poultry, oysters, clams, shellfish, or fish
- Dried beans, dried peas, lentils, nuts, or seeds
- Dried fruit
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Iron-fortified breads and cereals
- Blackstrap molasses

Cooking in cast-iron cookware will increase the iron content of your food.

*These foods are high in cholesterol.

Absorb Iron-Rich Foods Better

- Vitamin C helps your body absorb iron. Include a vitamin C–rich food with every meal. Vitamin C–rich foods include oranges, grapefruits, strawberries, kiwis, mangoes, papayas, guavas, cantaloupes, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, chilies, and dark green leafy vegetables.
- Avoid taking antacids or calcium supplements 2 hours before eating a meal or with an iron supplement.
- Avoid coffee, tea, or milk with meals when you are eating iron-rich foods.

Iron Supplements

- Check with your doctor or other health care professional about using iron supplements.
- If you have been told to use an iron supplement, take it with a vitamin C–rich food. If it does not upset your stomach, take it between meals.
- Check with your doctor or other health care professional before giving your child an iron supplement. Do not give *your* iron pills to your child as they can be harmful.
- Tell your pharmacist if you are taking iron supplements.
- Iron supplements can cause constipation. Eat foods high in fiber and drink more water.

For more information, please contact your registered dietitian or local Center for Healthy Living (kp.org/centerforhealthyliving).