

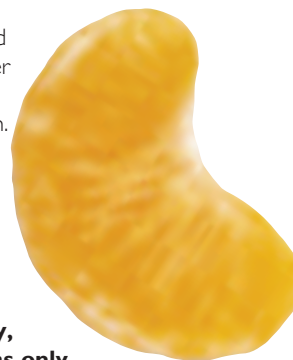


Where is it?

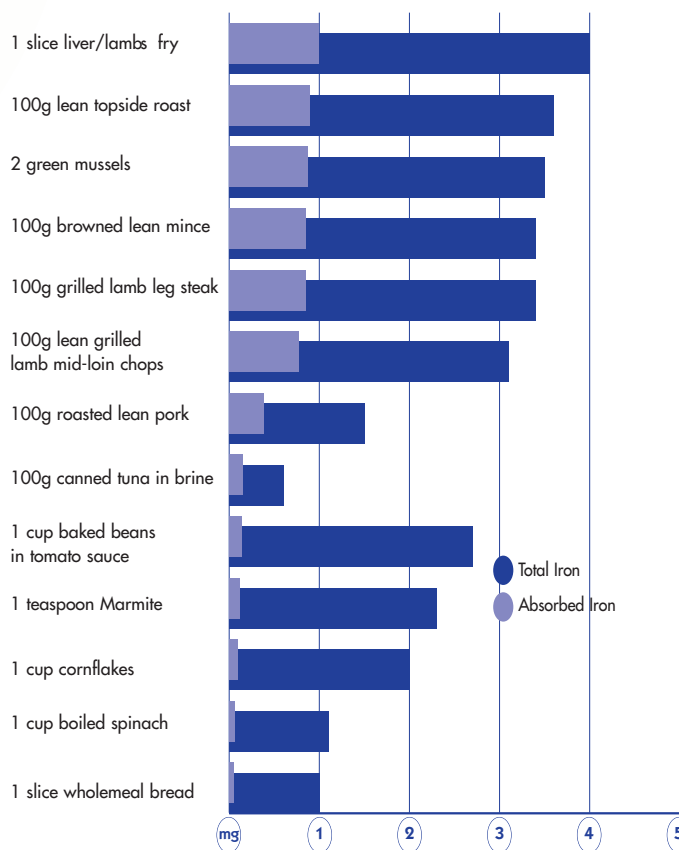
Iron is found in a number of foods, including red meat. In general, the redder the meat, the higher the iron content. But not all iron is the same. Iron is found in two forms: haem and non-haem.

Haem iron foods – beef, lamb, liver, kidney, pork, poultry, seafood

Non-haem iron foods – vegetables, bread, breakfast cereals, beans and lentils, eggs, nuts, fruit



The body absorbs haem iron more easily, with about a quarter being used, whereas only about 5% of non-haem iron is absorbed.



Red meat can help to increase absorption, boosting the use of non-haem iron by up to four times. Vitamin C has a similar effect. Eating a combination of foods high in both haem and non-haem iron will ensure an iron-rich diet.

Follow these easy steps to increase your iron intake:

- Eat foods high in haem iron (red meat)
- Eat foods high in non-haem iron (plant foods), combining them with haem iron foods, to boost absorption
- Eat foods high in Vitamin C (fruit and vegetables) with every meal to boost non-haem iron absorption
- Avoid drinking tea with your meals as this reduces the absorption of non-haem iron

Iron-rich meal ideas for everyone

Breakfast:

- Bowl of iron-fortified cereal topped with Vitamin C-rich fruit, such as kiwifruit, tamarillos or melon
- Wholemeal toast with a glass of fruit juice

Tip: Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee when you first wake up, rather than with your breakfast, as tea and coffee reduce iron absorption from foods such as cereal and toast.

Lunch:

- Filled roll with lean beef and salad
- Sandwich of beef, liver paté, peanut butter or sardines with tomato, chopped carrot, celery, capsicum
- Pita filled with lean beef, lamb or tuna, and salad
- Jacket potato filled with chilli or baked beans, topped with cheese and served with salad

Tip: Including meat and fish increases the absorption of non-haem iron from the bread and vegetables. Adding fresh fruit or fruit juice to the meal will maximise iron absorption.

Dinner:

- Lean beef or lamb casserole with potatoes and vegetables
- Meatballs and sauce with pasta and vegetables
- Lean beef or lamb stir-fry with vegetables and rice or noodles
- Boil-up with brisket, kumara, potato and vegetables
- Lean beef mince and red kidney beans, wrapped in tortilla or pita bread with salad and salsa
- Meat or fish-topped pizza with salad

Tip: Fruit desserts such as fresh fruit salad with yoghurt, stewed dried fruit and ice cream or fruit crumble and custard will help to increase both the iron content and absorption from the meal.

Why do we need iron?

Iron is a mineral essential to good health and mental and physical wellbeing. It helps carry oxygen to the brain and muscles.

Who needs iron most?

- Infants, children and teenagers because they are growing rapidly
- Pregnant women
- Girls and women who have periods, due to regular monthly blood loss
- Athletes and very active people

If we don't have enough iron in our blood, we:

- feel tired
- have difficulty concentrating
- find it harder to learn
- feel cold
- are less able to fight infection

Children in particular may suffer long-term learning or development problems if they are iron deficient.

Iron-rich meals for baby

By around six months of age a baby's iron stores are beginning to run out and iron needs are increasing. At this time, solid foods are gradually introduced. It is important these early foods are good sources of easily absorbed iron. Purées of lean meat, liver, vegetables and fruit are good iron sources. The texture can be increased to include mashed, minced or finely chopped foods as baby progresses. Iron-rich finger foods, such as strips of cooked lean meat or fingers of bread and vegetables, can be introduced from 8-9 months. To ensure your baby is getting enough iron, continue giving breast milk or infant formula until about 1 year, and do not give cows' milk as a main drink until after this time. Tea is an unsuitable drink for babies.

Meaty Hot Pot

Suitable from 6 months

- 450g beef or lamb casserole cubes
- 400g can baked beans
- ½ small swede, peeled and cubed
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp tomato purée*
- 300ml water
- 2 large potatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp oil



In a large casserole dish, mix together the meat, beans, swede, carrots, onion and tomato purée. Stir the water into the casserole mix. Cover and cook at 180°C for ½ hour. Remove the casserole from the oven and top with the sliced potatoes, brush with oil. Return to the oven, uncovered for 1 hour. Serve with a large portion of seasonal vegetables.

***6-7 months** – at this age, leave the tomato purée out of the recipe. Blend the meat mixture or mash with a fork and serve with chopped potato slices and mashed vegetables.

From 8 months – include the tomato purée, and chop or mash the large pieces of meat and vegetables.

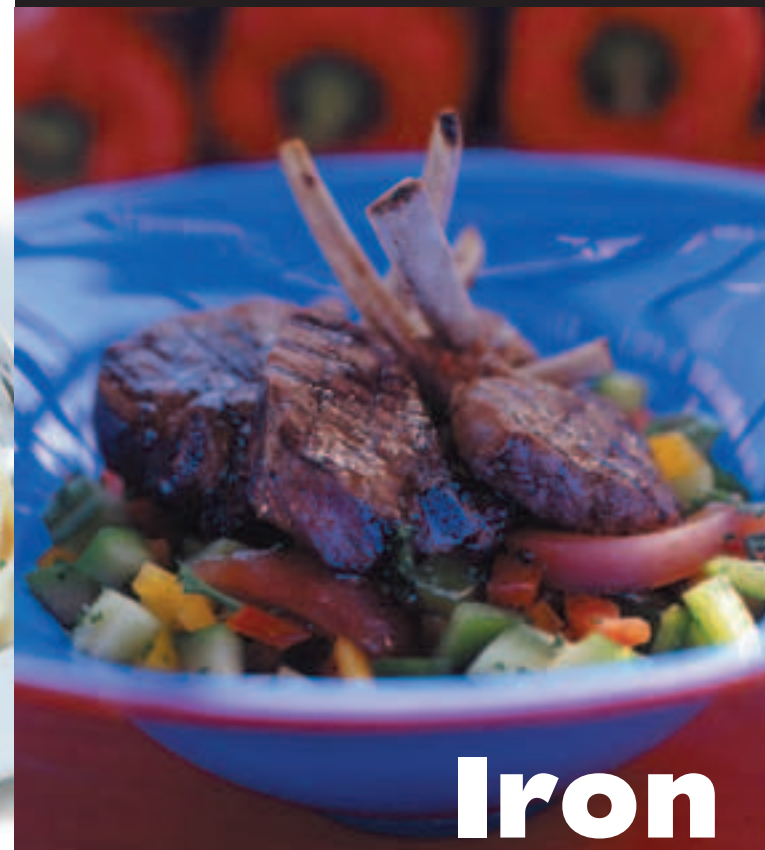
For more information, ask for the leaflets 'Is your baby getting enough iron?' and 'Easy iron-rich meals for babies and toddlers' Freephone 0800 733 466.

Tuscan Beef & Pasta

An iron-rich meal for all the family

- 500g lean minced beef
- 4 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1 tsp allspice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp paprika
- 130g tomato paste
- 500g jar pasta sauce
- 1 Tbsp instant dried beef stock
- 2 – 3 fresh or dried bay leaves
- Dash Worcestershire sauce

Heat oil in a frying pan and brown the onion, garlic, beef and spices over a high heat. Add the remaining ingredients, stirring well. Reduce the heat and gently simmer, uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over your favourite fresh pasta with parmesan cheese, a spoonful of basil pesto (optional) and a side salad. Serves 6.



Iron

The Body's Gold



For more information about iron and health, and/or recipes please contact: New Zealand Beef and Lamb Marketing Bureau, PO Box 33-648, Takapuna, Auckland. Freephone 0800 733 466, or visit www.nzbeeflamb.co.nz

Health problems may result from an inadequate diet (including iron deficiency). They may also have a medical basis unrelated to diet. The information in this booklet is only general and is not to be taken as a substitute for medical advice in relation to specific symptoms or health concerns.

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