

## IRON NEEDS IN PREGNANCY

Iron is a mineral needed to make hemoglobin. This protein in red blood cells carries oxygen to your organs, tissues, and your baby. Large amounts of iron are essential for your own increasing blood volume and for your baby's developing blood supply. Because it can be difficult to get the recommended amount of iron daily during pregnancy from diet alone, your prenatal vitamin will contain 27-90 mg of this mineral.

Your hemoglobin level will be checked early in pregnancy, and again at 26-28 weeks. If iron deficiency anemia is present, you will need to supplement with an additional iron tablet.

You can increase your iron intake through diet. Vitamin C will help your body absorb iron. Antacids, calcium, and caffeine, however, can block iron absorption, so avoid taking your prenatal vitamin and iron supplement with milk, tea, or coffee.

Primary sources of dietary iron are meats, eggs, vegetables, and iron-fortified cereals. Other food sources of iron include:

Spinach	Prune Juice
Nuts: Almonds, Cashews, Walnuts	Peas
Soybeans	Beef, Pork, Shrimp
Blackstrap Molasses	Oatmeal
Raisins	Chex
Liver	Total
Chili	All-Bran
Beans	Cream of Wheat

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