

# Dietary Iron

## Questions about Iron Deficiency

You've been diagnosed with low iron levels... Where to start? What are iron-rich foods? What can be done to increase iron levels?

### DIETARY IRON SOURCES ARE READILY AVAILABLE!

Iron rich foods can be budget friendly, and easy to prepare. Iron supplements may not be necessary when individuals are able to identify iron rich foods and how the body absorbs iron.

### NUTRIENTS LIKE CALCIUM AND CAFFEINE CAN INHIBIT IRON ABSORPTION IN THE BODY.

It is recommended to consume iron rich foods separate from high calcium foods (most commonly dairy products) and caffeinated items for optimal absorption.

### VITAMIN C ENHANCES THE BODY'S ABILITY TO ABSORB IRON.

Consuming a source of vitamin C at the same time as an iron source can help the body to more efficiently absorb and utilize dietary iron. Foods high in vitamin C include: citrus fruits, broccoli, bell peppers, kiwi, melons, strawberries and tomatoes.

### HEME IRON IS MORE READILY ABSORBED IN THE BODY THAN NON HEME IRON.

Heme iron sources include most meat items: red meat, pork and poultry. Non heme iron sources still contain iron, they just require a larger amount to be eaten in order to get the benefits. These include green leafy vegetables, beans, eggs, peas, fortified cereals, breads and pastas.

### IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF IRON CONSUMED AND ABSORBED IN ONE'S DIET:

individuals should consume iron rich foods with a source of vitamin C and avoid caffeine or dairy at the same meal or snack.

