



Anemia and Iron

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Popeye was right! We do need spinach to build strength or, more specifically, strong blood. Actually, all dark green leafy vegetables are wonderfully rich in minerals, including iron, and important nutrients betacarotene, the precursor to vitamin A, and vitamin C, which helps iron to be better absorbed. This article has been prepared to assist those who want to assure an adequate intake of iron or have been told by their health care practitioner that they are anemic (low in iron). Please bear in mind that men and post-menopausal women have lower iron requirements than pregnant or menstruating females. Curiously, a frequent desire to chew ice is a sign of anemia. When purchasing foods and herbs **buy organic** whenever possible; good for the earth, greater nutritional value for you. Here is the world of iron beyond meat and egg yolks:

🌿 Sources of Iron 🌿

All green leafy vegetables are rich in iron. The darker the color the stronger the nutritional value. Uncooked choices include:

Spinach (best eaten raw), **parsley, cilantro, arugula, romaine, mesclun salad mix** and other **salad greens** excluding head lettuce, which is sometimes humorously referred to as "the whitebread of the vegetable kingdom".

Enjoy cooked greens as a side dish or added in any quantity to soups, casseroles or any vegetable dish. They are also a good source of calcium. Serve with a squirt of lemon or lime to aid absorption. For easier eating remove the main stem and other heavy veins. Chop finely before adding to soups or purée for a change of pace or as a bit of nutritional camouflage. Choices include:

Swiss chard (the very mildest of cooked greens which children really do love), **kale, parsley, dandelion, collard, mustard** and **beet greens**. (Eat **beets**, too!), **turnip greens, escarole** and **calaloo/amaranth greens**.

In addition to iron all of the greens listed above are not only significant sources of calcium they are rich in potassium, folic acid and antioxidants. *True nutritional powerhouses!*

Savor iron rich fruits eaten fresh, dried, cooked as compote, added to entrées, desserts or cereals: **Black raisins, black mission figs, prunes, dates, pomegranates, and blackberries**.

Many people find iron pills difficult to digest and often quite constipating. Easier to assimilate are iron rich herbs taken in tea or extract form:

Yellow dock, dandelion leaf, dandelion root, burdock root/gobo, nettles and **red raspberry leaves**, Native American women knew that red raspberry leaves are especially valuable during pregnancy because they prepare the birth canal for an easier labor and delivery.

Pumpkin seeds are a surprisingly rich source of iron and zinc. They are easiest to digest when shelled pumpkin seeds are toasted without oil in a frying pan and stirred continually over medium heat until they slightly 'pop.' Allow to cool thoroughly then store in a sealed jar, preferably in the refrigerator.

Blackstrap molasses is the iron rich sweetener of choice. **Black cherry juice** and **pomegranate juice** are the iron rich beverages of choice.

Excellent alcohol-free liquid tonics which rapidly build iron rich blood are available. **Flora Floradix™** or yeast and gluten-free **Flora Floravital™** are good tasting prepared formulas available in health food stores. Store in the refrigerator and use within one month of opening the bottle.

🌿 Here are some additional considerations 🌿

- **Women** who are pregnant or menstruating need an iron rich diet. Women with heavy menses due to uterine fibroids or other causes should seek appropriate treatment to resolve this underlying cause of anemia.
- **Strengthen digestion**, and thereby iron assimilation, by drinking a hot cup of herbal tea every morning and, whenever possible, after meals. *See my flyer on Strengthening Digestion for more detailed information.*
Take a **food enzyme** supplement with meals to assist absorption. This is especially advisable for meat eaters who experience chronic anemia even after adding the nutritional recommendations above to their diet.
- In his comprehensive tome Diet and Nutrition: A Holistic Approach Rudolph Ballentine, M.D. wrote:
"Compounds in the food, like ascorbic acid [vitamin C], may chelate the iron, causing it to be easily absorbed, and it is sometimes said that iron deficiency in women may have increased in recent years because of the move away from the use of the old-fashioned **cast iron utensils** [cooking pots]."
- **Research** conducted by Hans Hertel and Bernard Blanc found that individuals who consume foods prepared in **microwave ovens** have lowered red blood cell (hemoglobin) counts. Therefore, it is advisable to eliminate microwaved foods from the diet. Detailed information is available at mercola.com. Type *microwave food safety* into the site's search engine.
Cell phones operate on microwave technology. Is cell phone use contributing to the upsurge of anemia in males and females of all ages? In the presence of so many unknowns about the safety of long term exposure to cell phones it would be prudent to minimize contact. Place cell phones at a distance at work and at home or while sleeping. Definitely do not wear a cell phone over the heart or reproductive areas.
- Finally, Beatrice Waight of Belize, a healer in the Mayan tradition, teaches that unresolved anemia results from "fright". To help release fright, old shocks and trauma, use **Healing Herbs Five Flower Formula™**. Place 4 drops of this flower essence blend in 1/2 glass of water and sip slowly over a few minutes. Repeat 4 times daily for 9 to 21 days. Healing Herbs Five Flower Formula™ flower essence blend (available from the Flower Essence Service) is preferred by many to Bach Brand Rescue Remedy™ as Dr. Bach's original formula has been altered. Further, a homeopathic physician may prescribe a high potency Aconite homeopathic remedy to address shock on a deeper level.

Note: Pernicious anemia or hidden internal bleeding can cause anemia. Always seek medical treatment when bleeding or chronic anemia are present.

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