



PATIENT INFORMATION

Increasing Dietary Iron

Iron is an essential micronutrient it is used by the body to produce red blood cells.

Red blood cells are one of the main constituents of blood. Their role is to carry oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body, where it is used in the production of energy.

If there is not enough iron in the diet, anaemia may develop.

Symptoms of anaemia include:

- Tiredness
- Palour (pale skin)
- Pins and needles
- Breathlessness on exertion

There are two main sources of dietary iron

- **Haem Iron** which is the iron found in meat and meat products. This type of iron is readily absorbed in the bloodstream.
- **Non-Haem Iron** This type of iron is found within non-meat products. It is not as easily absorbed, **but** there are ways of improving the absorption. (see page 2)

In order to improve iron levels, include a variety of foods from the following list.

Food sources of Iron

Foods are listed per average portion

Haem sources

Liver	Lean beef	Lean mince
Faggots	Sardines	Liver pate
Kidney	Pilchards	Trimmed bacon
Corned beef	Mackerel	Trout
Sausages/burgers	Tuna	Salmon
Lean pork	Meat paste/spreads	Lamb cutlet
Chicken	Prawns	Ham

Other sources of iron

Fortified breakfast cereal	Dried fruit	Kidney beans (canned)
Baked beans	Nuts	Wholemeal bread
Spinach	Eggs	Broccoli
Peanut butter	Chocolate	White bread
Cabbage	Tofu	Watercress

Improving absorption of non-haem iron

Vitamin C Foods rich in vitamin C increase the absorption of iron.

Foods rich in Vitamin C include, orange, grapefruit, tomato, blackcurrants and their juices.

Watercress
Broccoli.

Breakfast cereal with orange juice
Sandwich with salad

Tea Tea contains a substance known as tannin, this may inhibit the absorption of iron. It is therefore important that we avoid drinking tea with our meals.

Have fruit juice instead of tea.

Unrefined Bran A substance known as phytate is found in unrefined cereal foods. Therefore, it is important to avoid adding extra unrefined bran to food, as this can inhibit the absorption of iron.

Fibre found within foods should not have this effect.