

Choose FOODS WITH IRON

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Why is iron important?

Iron is important for making red blood cells that carry oxygen through the body. It also helps the body make energy.

Consuming enough iron may. . .

- ◆ Help you feel like you have more energy.
- ◆ Help you resist infections.
- ◆ Help children grow.
- ◆ Help children increase their ability to learn.

How much iron is enough?

Males over 1-year-old need 10 milligrams a day, except for teenagers who need 12 milligrams a day.

Females over 1-year-old need 10 milligrams a day until they

become teenagers when the amount increases to 15 milligrams. It decreases to 10 milligrams after age 50.

Pregnant and lactating women need 15 milligrams per day.

How can you get enough iron?

From . . .

Foods with iron

Eat lean meats, dry beans and peas, green leafy vegetables and other foods with iron.

Foods with iron added

Choose foods fortified with iron, like breads and cereals.

If you are pregnant or lactating, talk to your healthcare provider about taking an iron supplement.

If you suspect you may have iron-deficiency anemia, get your blood checked. Ask your healthcare provider about taking a supplement.

Choose

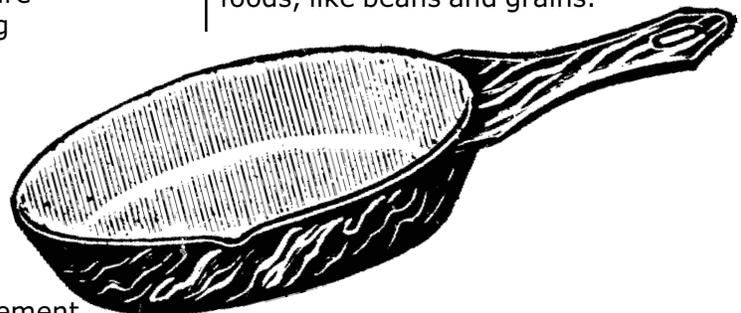
1. **3 or more “best” or “good” iron foods a day**
2. **foods with vitamin C when you eat iron foods**
3. **small amounts of lean meat with iron**
4. **iron cookware to prepare foods**

Vitamin C helps the body use the iron in some foods

Meat helps the body use the iron in some foods

Iron in cookware adds iron to some foods, like beans and pasta

If you drink tea or coffee, drink it between meals. It may keep your body from using the iron in some foods, like beans and grains.



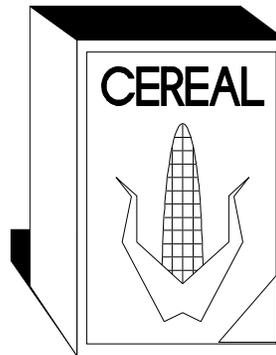
Foods with iron are found in almost every food group. One exception is the milk group. Dairy foods are not good iron foods but have other important nutrients.

The best iron foods . . .

Liver

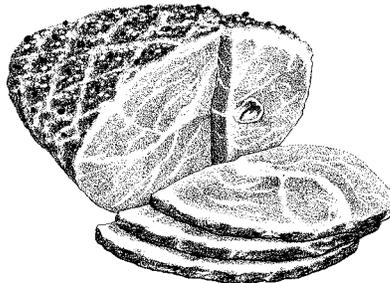
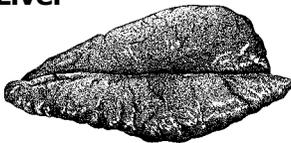
Lean meat (such as beef, pork, lamb)

Iron-fortified cereals (such as WIC cereals, Cream of Wheat[®], bran flakes, Product 19[®])



Iron-fortified cereal

Liver



Lean pork

Lean beef



Good iron foods . . .

Poultry (such as chicken and turkey)

Fish

Dry beans, peas and lentils (such as, pinto beans, Great Northern beans, kidney beans, navy beans)

Dark green leafy vegetables (such as spinach, collard greens, turnip greens, kale)

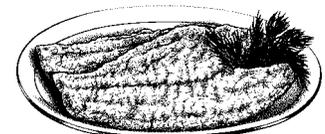
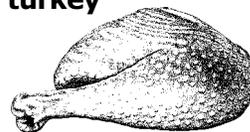
Whole grain and enriched bread

Pasta (such as spaghetti, macaroni and noodles)

Dried fruits (such as apricots and prunes)

Black strap molasses

Chicken, turkey



Fish



Dry Beans and Peas

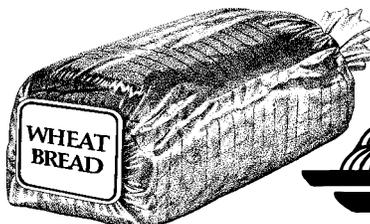


Green Leafy Vegetables

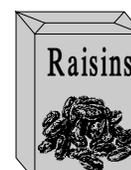


Black strap Molasses

Whole-grain and enriched bread



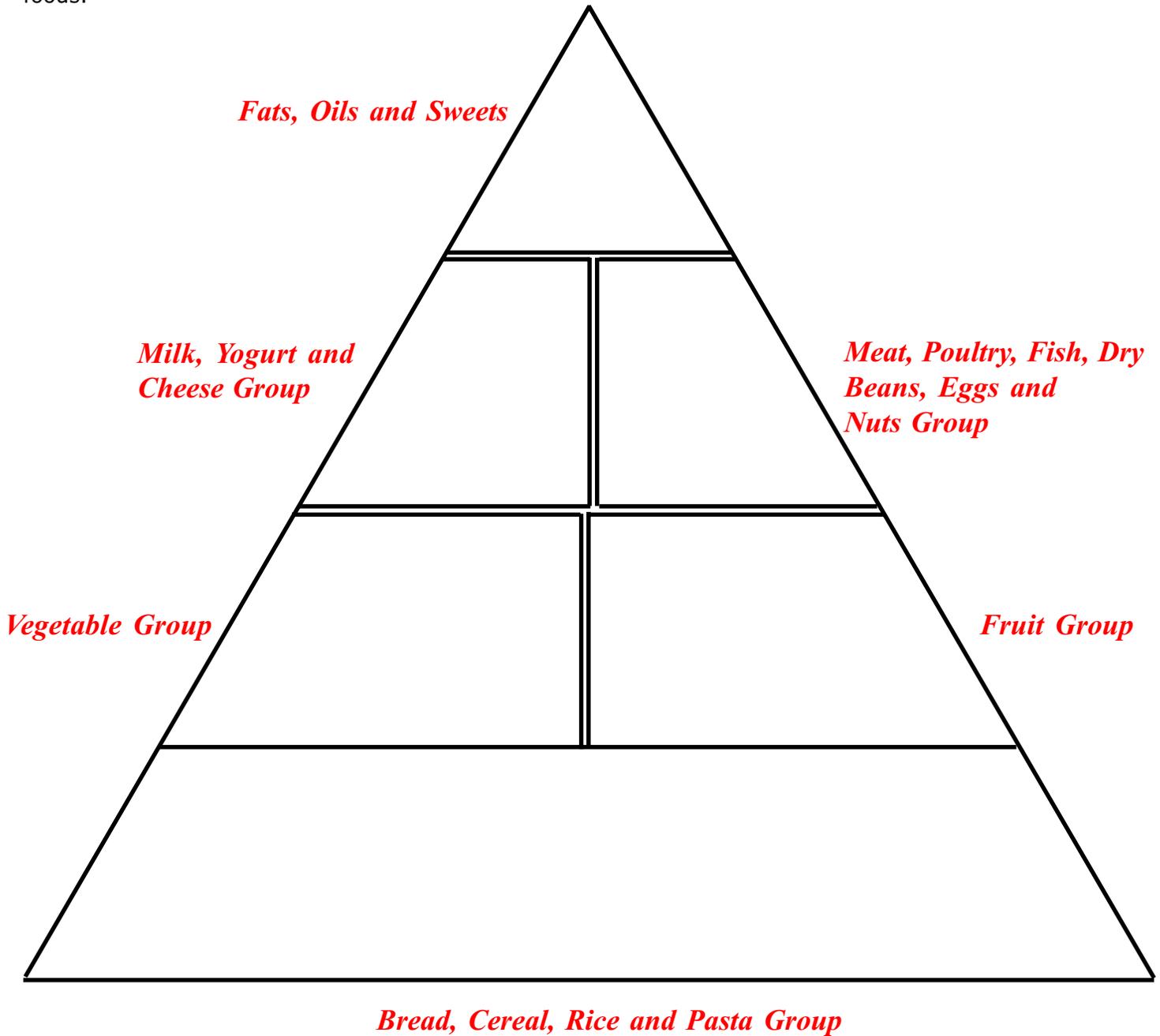
Spaghetti and other pastas



Raisins and other dried fruit

Which food groups have iron foods?

Directions: Write the foods listed above in the correct group in the pyramid below. Circle the "best" iron foods.



Which groups have "best" and "good" iron foods?

Which group has more foods that are the "best" sources of iron?

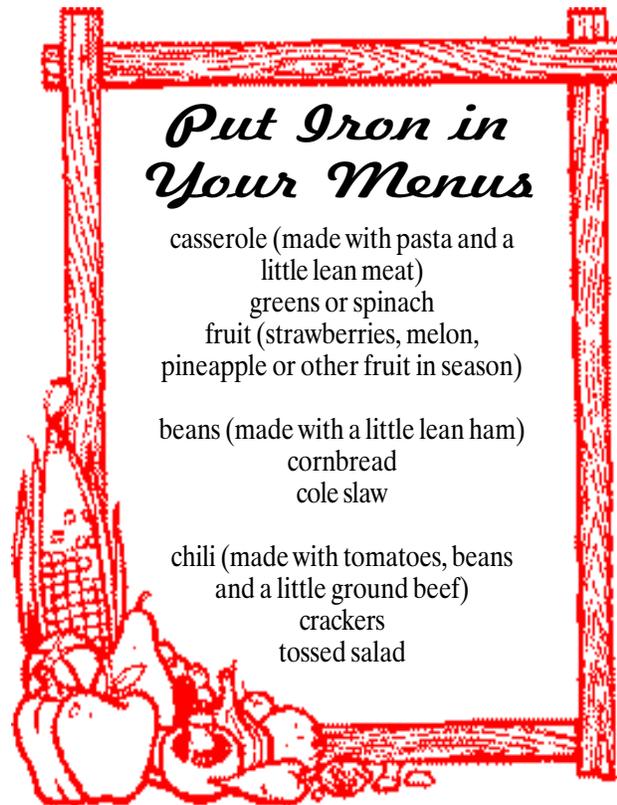
Can you get too much iron?

It is hard to get too much iron from foods but you can get too much iron from supplements. It is a good idea to have the iron in your blood checked by your healthcare provider before taking supplements.

How much iron you need depends on your age and if you are male or female.

- ♦ If you are a woman in your child-bearing years, you need iron to make new blood to replace blood you lose each month.
- ♦ If you are pregnant, you need iron to make new blood for you and the baby.
- ♦ If you are a child or teenager, you need iron to grow.
- ♦ If you are a man, and you are concerned about iron, check with your health-care provider before taking supplements.

Caution: Keep iron pills out of your child's reach. A child can be poisoned from as few as five iron pills.



“Choose Foods with Iron” is one in a series of publications to help you select and prepare healthy foods.

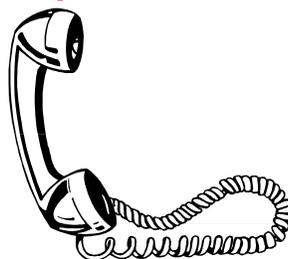
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For more information about food and nutrition, contact your local Agricultural Extension office.

Answers

Which food groups have “best” or “good” iron foods? *All groups but the Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group*

Which food group has more foods that are the “best” sources of iron? *Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts Group*



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