

## USEFUL FACTS

### Iron & Anaemia

#### Why is it important?

- Iron is an essential part of haemoglobin, the red colouring of blood, which helps carry oxygen to every part of the body.
- If your iron or haemoglobin count is low, you may lack energy and feel tired that make performing normal everyday tasks difficult.
- Iron plays an important role in immune function. A lack of iron can lower your immunity making you more prone infections.
- Iron is found in a number of foods, including red meat. In general, the redder the meat, the higher the iron content. But not all iron is the same.

#### Types of Iron

- Iron is found in two forms: Haem iron and non-haem iron.
- Red meat such as beef or lamb is one of our richest food sources of haem iron. Pork, fish and poultry also contain haem iron.
- The iron in non-meat foods such as eggs, spinach, fruits and wholegrain cereals is non-haem iron.
- The iron in meat, fish and chicken is much better absorbed than that from non-meat sources.
- Absorption can be improved by eating those foods with others high in vitamin C or with meat, fish or chicken.

#### Iron Deficiency

##### Who is most at risk of iron deficiency?

There are many factors that contribute to iron deficiency but the common reasons why people become iron deficient are:

- Poor food choices or very low energy intakes make it difficult to meet the body's needs for growth and physical activity.
- In athletes, there is an increased need for iron. Children and adolescents also have higher iron requirements for growth.
- Blood loss through injury, blood nose & menstruation.

##### Signs and symptoms of iron deficiency?

Symptoms of iron deficiency include:

- Tiredness.
- Poor appetite.
- Increased incidence and duration of colds and infections.
- Pale and lethargic.

#### How much do I need each day?

- Children (1-7 years old) 6-8mg
- Adolescents (12-18 years old) 10-13mg
- Men 7mg
- Women 12-16mg
- Women after menopause 5-7mg
- Pregnant Women +10-20mg

#### Iron content of foods

##### Haem iron foods

- 100g cooked mussels 11.2mg
- 125g venison 5.1mg
- 125g grilled lamb leg steak 3.9mg
- 125g cooked lean beef 3.8mg
- Cream 125g cooked lean mince 3.4mg
- 100g (½ can) salmon 1.4mg
- 125g roast chicken 1.1mg

##### Non-haem iron foods

- 130g tofu 7.0mg
- 1 cup kidney beans 4.3mg
- 1 cup porridge 1.3mg
- 1 cup cooked spinach 2.7mg
- 10 dried apricots 1.4mg
- 1 boiled egg 1.1mg

## Bright Tip!

Taking iron supplements when you feel tired and run down will not help unless you have been diagnosed with iron deficiency.