

Iron and Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, you need even more iron than usual. This is because when you are pregnant, your body makes more blood. You need more blood because all of your baby's oxygen and food is carried in your blood. Your body uses iron to make this new blood. By the end of your pregnancy, you can have up to twice as much blood as you did before you got pregnant. Making all this blood takes a lot of iron.

You need iron for another reason, too. In the last few weeks of your pregnancy, your baby is storing up iron. When your baby is born, she should have enough iron stored in her body to last for six months. This is because the best food for a new baby is milk, and milk does not contain much iron.

Easy Ways To Get More Iron (Vegetarian)

Dark Green Leafy Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Green Beans
- Romaine Lettuce
- Collards
- Mustard Greens
- Peas
- Spinach
- Beet Greens
- Kale
- Bok Choy

Whole Grain Breads

- Whole wheat bread
- Rye bread
- Oatmeal bread
- Multi-grain bread
- Whole grain muffins
- Bran or oatmeal muffins

Whole Grain Cereals

- Instant oatmeal
- Whole wheat cereal
- Raisin bran

Eat Peanut Butter

- On Toast
- In sandwiches
- On crackers
- On celery sticks

Dried Fruit

- Put raisins in your cereal
- Add raisins or prunes as a snack
- Try stewed prunes

Beans (Legumes)

- Canned or homemade baked beans
- Kidney beans in Chili
- Split pea soup
- Refried beans

Eggs

- Hard or soft boiled
- Egg Salad sandwiches
- Hard boiled eggs in potato salad

Converted Rice or Brown Rice

- Converted rice has more iron than plain rice
- Enriched (or whole grain) Spaghetti and Macaroni.

Check the label to be sure iron has been added since not all countries do this.