

## *Food for Ferritin*

Ferritin is a type of protein that acts as a storage tank for iron in your body. Iron is a mineral that is essential to red blood cells transporting oxygen and nutrients to every cell in our body. The amount of ferritin in your blood indicates your iron level. If ferritin is low, you can help to increase your levels by eating the correct sources of iron along with foods that increase iron absorption.

When blood levels are low, ferritin will release the iron stored maintaining a steady supply. When your daily diet does not meet iron requirements, ferritin will help to fill the void. If your iron consumption is consistently low or you have an iron depleting medical condition, your ferritin levels could drop, and you could be at risk of an iron deficiency.

According to the 'National Institution of Health' - Men need 8-11 milligrams of iron daily. Women need 18 milligrams a day until they reach menopause, when their RDA drops to 8 milligrams and pregnant or lactating women need 10-27 milligrams.

Iron supplements may help prevent or treat low ferritin but consult your health care provider before taking supplements to check your ferritin level and to determine the right type of iron and the right dose.

### **Heme vs. Non-Heme**

Foods contain two types of iron, Heme (animal sources) and Non-Heme (plant sources). Heme iron, found in lean meat, fish and poultry absorbs two to three times more than Non-Heme iron.

You can still build ferritin levels by eating non-heme iron found in plant sourced foods like dark leafy greens, legumes, grains, nuts and seeds but they are incomplete proteins and you need to combine two non-heme iron foods in the one meal to create a complete protein.

### **Heme Iron Foods:**

- Lean red meat, chicken, turkey, veal, lamb
- Eggs
- Pork
- Liver, offal
- Fish, oysters, clams and mussels - avoid tins containing BPA

### **Non-Heme Iron Foods:**

- Legumes, lentils, soybeans, tofu, tempeh, lima beans and other dried beans
- Grains, quinoa, fortified cereals, brown rice, oatmeal
- Nuts and seeds
- Green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, beets
- Blackstrap molasses, prune juice, liquorice, raisins and Bee Pollen
- Thyme, parsley and spearmint

## **Important Things to Remember to raise Ferritin with food**

### **It's not about how much iron you consume, but how well you absorb it**

Gluten (found in wheat and other products), dairy and sugar will create a competing environment and block iron absorption. Avoid gluten, dairy, and sugar with low ferritin and iron. Carbohydrates also create a competing environment and will inhibit heme absorption when consumed in the same meal. Eat heme iron (animal proteins) with vegetables or salad, not carbohydrates or starchy, high GI (glycaemic index) vegetables or grains. Non-heme iron (plant proteins) work well with carbohydrates if they are gluten and GMO-free.

### **Less is more**

Our bodies absorb lower amounts of iron at one time if consuming larger meals than it would if consuming smaller meals. Plant-based foods may contain less iron than animal foods but eating 5-6 small meals (including your Green Drink, if applicable) throughout the day is a great way to increase iron absorption.

### **Increase absorption with Vitamin C**

Vitamin C enhances absorption of non-heme iron, this will greatly impact your ferritin if both nutrients are included in the same meal. Vitamin C can be found in capsicums, brussel sprouts, broccoli and sweet potatoes. Vitamin C found in vegetables can increase non-heme iron absorption up to five times. Some non-heme rich foods already contain vitamin C, such as dark, leafy greens, peas and broccoli.

### **Coffee and tea can block iron**

Dairy products, coffee and tea will inhibit non-heme absorption. Coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated) and tea contain tannins that inhibit iron absorption. Avoid consuming these a minimum of one hour before/two hours after your meals.

### **Everything in moderation**

We do not recommend that you only rely on just one product to raise ferritin levels. For example, if eaten in excess, spinach contains oxalates that block absorption. Eat a combination of compatible iron-rich foods and do not eat the same thing every day and be wary of your daily sugar intake, particularly when snacking on dried fruits.

### **Maintain pH acid-alkaline balance**

Always keep in mind your body's pH. Different foods require different environments for adequate digestion and combining foods incorrectly can cause them to spoil in your stomach, producing acids and toxins. Fruit may not be eaten with any other fruit or food and carbohydrates may not be eaten with any animal proteins. Combine acid foods with alkaline foods to maintain a healthy pH balance. Refer to your Easy pH information book for a more detailed explanation of food combining.

### **Eat organic**

We understand that organic foods are not always cost effective, but we encourage you to eat as many organic foods as you can, to ensure you are obtaining as many of the nutrients from foods as possible without the nasty chemicals in fertilisers. In particular; animal sources should only be organic, hormone free and be raised in their natural food sources.

### **Non-Heme Iron**

Non-Heme iron can be an incomplete protein. Always combine two or more non-heme iron sources at each meal if only consuming non-heme iron. Soy product need to be organic or they could be GMO (genetically modified).

## **Non-Heme Foods for Ferritin**

**Brussels sprouts** - Brussels sprouts are a viable source of antioxidants, vitamins, folate, and fibre and excellent source of iron. Eat sautéed or roasted.

**Arugula (Rocket)** - Dark greens such as arugula have countless health benefits with a tiny calorie count and can improve the health of your red blood cells. Eat in a salad, soups, and pastas or on pizza.

**Collard Greens** – Certain loose-leafed cultivars of Brassica oleracea, the same species as many common vegetables, including cabbage and broccoli. High in calcium, vitamin A, iron and vitamin C, and contains several cancer-fighting elements. Use raw in a salad with other iron-rich greens to get the most out of the nutrients.

**Potatoes** – One of the best iron-rich foods and packed with vitamin C. Works well as a main or as a side dish, combine with other iron-rich foods.

**Kale** - Low calorie, fat-free superfood. Kale helps fight anaemia and fatigue with a high iron content. Eat raw in a salad, sauté it, put it in a soup or make kale chips!

**Tomatoes/Sun Dried Tomatoes** – High in iron, antioxidants, healthy lycopene and vitamin C, sundried tomatoes make a tasty addition to omelettes, pasta sauce, pizza, sandwiches, salads, and so much more.

**Peas** – Snow peas and Snap peas are rich in iron and other nutrients; peas have a slightly sweet taste. Cook a serving as a standalone side dish, or incorporate peas into your salad, soup, and pasta dishes. Black-Eyed Peas like Lima beans are rich in iron and also contain vitamin C. Enjoy in many Southern style dishes, with greens or in salads.

**Cooked Spinach** - Along with other vitamins and nutrients, superfood spinach has a high iron content and is also loaded with vitamin C. Spinach can be eaten raw but cooking it first will provide greater amounts of iron.

**Broccoli** – Packed with iron and vitamin C, broccoli absorbs easily in our bodies. Eat raw or steamed in salads, roasts.

**Herbs** – With its unique flavour and high iron content, Thyme, Parsley, Spearmint work well as a healthy flavour enhancer to many favourite vegetable dishes. Mix with roast vegetables, in soups or on pizzas.

**Lentils** - Packed with vitamins and nutrients including iron, protein, and essential amino acids, Lentils are a perfect addition to traditional Indian and Middle Eastern meals or in soups, patties, stews or salads.

**Beans** - Soybeans another versatile superfood, full of protein, good fats, fibre and minerals like iron. Soybeans work well in stir-fries, soups and salads, but must be organic because of GMO crops. Pinto beans are rich in iron and pair well with whole wheat rice, salads or baked capsicums as a filler. Black beans are loaded with fibre, protein, and iron. Add as a filler to your favourite Mexican dishes, in vegetable patties or in salads. Lima beans are packed full of iron and can be eaten cooked on their own with spice or in stews, soups, salads and burger patties.

**Tofu** – Usually made from soybeans, tofu is rich in iron and other essential vitamins and minerals. Tofu comes in many different consistencies, making it very versatile. Use on its own, in stir-fries, curries or as an ingredient replacer. Make sure tofu is GMO-free.

**Peaches** – Enjoy sparingly as a snack, peaches are packed with nutrients, including iron.

**Raisins** – Containing large amounts of iron, raisins are full of nutrients. Enjoy as a light snack.

**Prune Juice** - High in vitamin C and iron, Prune juice makes it easy for your body to absorb the essential nutrients. But remember it must be sugar free and organic.

**Apricots** - Apricots are an excellent source of iron and other nutrients. They can be consumed raw, canned (BPA free), cooked, and dried.

**Strawberries** - Fresh strawberries are a great source of iron and have a high vitamin C content. Strawberries should only be eaten as a snack alone.

**\*Remember: No fruit with any other food or fruit\***

**Sunflower Seeds** – A great supply of vitamin E and plenty of essential minerals, especially iron. Available all year round, Sunflower seeds are great as a snack alone or as an additive to salads and meals

**Pumpkin Seeds** – Mostly beneficial raw, pumpkin seeds are an excellent source of iron. You could also roast and add to a salad or eat alone as a snack.

**Sesame Butter (Tahini)** – With plenty of iron, tahini is perfect to eat alone or is commonly used in hummus. Use as flavouring for your vegetables or in a salad dressing.

**Whole Wheat Pasta** – Enhanced with magnesium, calcium, potassium, and iron, Whole wheat pasta is a better alternative to white flour products.

**Oatmeal** – Another iron rich superfood, oatmeal is a perfect breakfast option or can be used in baking cookies, desserts or even toasted in salads.

**Brown Rice** - Naturally rich in fibre, brown rice helps rid the body of toxins, and its high iron content also helps fight anaemia and fatigue. Cook a serving of brown rice along with your favourite beans or veggies for an iron-rich meal.

**Whole Wheat Bread** – A better alternative to white bread, whole wheat bread is a great source of fibre, B vitamins, protein and iron. Eat moderately.

**Dark Chocolate** – In moderation, dark chocolate is not only an antioxidant, but it is loaded with iron. Enjoy as an occasional sweet treat. Focus on sugar-free, organic 100% Cacao.

**Molasses** – Add molasses to meals and drinks as an extra boost of iron.

Source: <http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/fastest-ways-increase-ferritin-12327.html>

Source: <http://www.nomeatathlete.com/iron-for-vegetarians/>

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**Absolique Hair Health Clinic**

Suite 5/71 Bradley Street, Spring Hill, 4000, QLD

(07) 3229-3242

[info@absolique.com.au](mailto:info@absolique.com.au)

[www.absoliquehairhealthclinic.com.au](http://www.absoliquehairhealthclinic.com.au)