

# Pregnancy & Anaemia



When you are pregnant your blood volume increases because of the growing baby. Iron is the main component of blood and so during pregnancy you need extra iron. Iron is not made by the body and can only be obtained from dietary sources. If your diet is lacking in iron, you may get very tired and become anaemic. It is important you should try to eat iron rich foods daily and many women are prescribed an iron supplement.

## FOODS WHICH ARE HIGH IN IRON

### MEAT

Red meat is the best source of iron:

Beef  
Lamb  
Pork  
Bacon/ham



Although liver is a good source of iron, liver, liver pate and liver sausage should be **AVOIDED** as they contain large amounts of Vitamin A, which can be harmful to your baby.



**Remember to cook all meat and poultry thoroughly so that there is no trace of pink or blood. Reheat ready-made meals until piping hot.**

## **EGGS**



The yolk of the egg is a good source of iron

Make sure eggs are thoroughly cooked to prevent the risk of salmonella poisoning.

## **FISH**

Especially oily fish e.g:



Mackerel  
Sardines  
Pilchards  
Whitebait  
Tuna - see below

It is recommended that during pregnancy and breast-feeding to limit intake of tuna to no more than 2 medium size cans or 1 fresh tuna steak per week. Avoid eating unusual fish like shark, marlin and swordfish as they may contain harmful levels of mercury. Avoid raw seafood like oysters or uncooked sushi. Avoid prawns or shellfish unless you know they have been thoroughly cooked.

## OTHER SOURCES OF IRON

### BREAKFAST CEREALS

Many breakfast cereals are now fortified with iron



### VEGETABLES & PULSES



Spinach  
Cabbage  
Peas  
Runner Beans  
Brussel Sprouts  
Broccoli  
Kidney  
Beans & other  
Beans  
Lentils  
Chick Peas  
Beetroot

### DRIED FRUIT

Sultanas, raisins, dates, apricots.  
prunes

### NUTS & SEEDS

#### ***All nuts***

It is advised that pregnant women from families with a history of asthma, eczema and hay fever avoid eating peanuts, groundnut oil and foods containing peanuts. This may reduce the risk of their child developing an allergy to peanuts.



## BREAD

Wholemeal bread and rolls

### THE IMPORTANCE OF VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is important in helping your body absorb iron.

Foods or drinks containing Vitamin C should be taken at each meal.

### SOURCES OF VITAMIN C

Citrus fruit - oranges, tangerines, satsumas, grapefruits and their juices



Other fruit - kiwi, blackcurrants

Vegetables - **do not** overcook as this destroys Vitamin C

Salad vegetables

Fortified squashes e.g Ribena, Robinsons Hi Juice

*Taking Vitamin C with your iron supplement can help your body absorb the iron.*

## TEA

Tea with a meal reduces the amount of iron absorbed from food. Try to avoid tea with meals.

## SAMPLE OF A MEAL PLAN

Breakfast	Fruit or Fruit Juice Fortified cereal with milk Wholemeal bread/toast Butter or margarine
Mid Morning	Tea, coffee, fruit juice or milk Wheaten scone or biscuit
Snack Meal	Meat/fish/egg/cheese or beans Salad vegetables or tomato Wholemeal bread/roll Butter or margarine Fresh fruit or yogurt
Mid Afternoon	Tea, coffee, fruit juice or milk Wheaten biscuit or fruit loaf
Main Meal	Meat or fish Potatoes or pasta or rice Vegetables - fresh, frozen or tinned Fruit - fresh, stewed or dried
Bedtime	Tea, coffee, fruit juice or milk Wholemeal bread or fortified cereal

## CONSTIPATION

Some women find they have a tendency towards constipation when pregnant. If you find the iron given to you causes constipation, then have your doctor change the supplement as you may find that another type does not cause the same problem. Do not forget to drink more water when pregnant as this can help prevent constipation.