

Getting iron from plant sources

Nourish Spotlight

ANEMIA

There are many benefits to including more fruits, vegetables, and plant-based proteins in our diet. They provide a variety of phytonutrients (*phyto-plants*) and fibre. Plant-based sources of iron (non-heme iron) include wholegrain cereals and breads, beans and legumes, green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and seeds, and their butters.

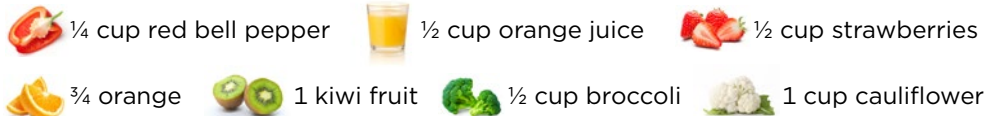
However, when following a strict plant-based diet, it is important to be mindful of getting enough iron from foods, since non-heme iron is not as well absorbed by our body.

Absorption of non-heme iron

Increasing absorption of non-heme iron can be a good focus. For example, foods rich in vitamin C can increase absorption of non-heme iron. On the other hand, dairy and calcium containing foods, tea, and coffee can inhibit absorption. Wait 1-2 hours after eating before drinking tea and coffee or taking calcium supplements.

HOW MUCH VITAMIN C TO ADD?

About 50mg of Vitamin C increases absorption 3x to 6x. **50mg of Vitamin C looks like:**



Peaches & Cream Overnight Oats

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup rolled oats
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- 3/4 cup soy beverage

Topping

- 1/2 cup sliced peaches
- 1 tsp oil
- 2 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp molasses
- 1 tsp pumpkin seeds

Preparation

1. In a jar, combine oats, seeds and soy beverage. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours.
2. Sauté peaches in oil. Add the peaches and other toppings to the heated or cold overnight oats.



IRON IN PLANTS

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	IRON PER SERVING SIZE
Pumpkin seeds	¼ cup	5 mg
Cashew nuts	1 cup	9 mg
Lentils, cooked	1 cup	7 mg
Apricot, dried	1 cup	4 mg
Oats	1 cup	3 mg
Tofu*	1 cup	14 mg
Tempeh	1 cup	5 mg
Spinach, raw	3 cups	3 mg
Kidney beans, canned	1 cup	3 mg
Chickpeas, canned	1 cup	3 mg
Kale, raw	3 cups	3 mg

*prepared with calcium sulphate
Source: The Canadian Nutrient File (CNF)

Iron Supplements

If you are struggling to get enough iron while following a strict plant-based diet, iron supplements may be an option. Iron supplements come in many different forms and dosages, some of which are easier on your digestion. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist before taking iron supplements.

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Supportive Cancer Care

AUTHORS

Megan Morrison RD, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, Toronto, Ontario
Stéphanie Pasaman RD, University of Montreal Health Centre (CHUM), Montreal, Quebec
Registered Dietitians from InspireHealth Supportive Cancer Care, Vancouver, British Columbia

DISCLAIMER

The information in this publication is not intended as medical advice nor should it replace advice, expertise and information given by a member of your healthcare team.

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SAMPLE PLANT-BASED MENU

This meal plan provides 19.7 mg of iron in a day.

(As an example, the recommended amount for a female, aged between 19–50 years, is 18 mg/day)

BREAKFAST

½ cup oats
+
½ cup dried apricots
+
¼ cup pumpkin seeds

8.2 mg iron



LUNCH

2 cups bean chili
+
2 cups spinach chopped and added
+
1 orange

6.5 mg iron



SNACK

Wholegrain crackers
+
¼ cup hummus
+
¼ red pepper

1.4 mg iron



DINNER

Stir-fry with 85g tofu, ½ cup broccoli, ½ cup cauliflower, 1½ cup chopped kale, sprinkled with 2 tbsp sunflower seeds

3.6 mg iron



Links

[Iron-rich vegetarian foods](#)

[Canadian Nutrient File](#)

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