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# Why we need iron in our diet

Be sure to keep your iron stores in stock to avoid fatigue and low energy levels.

IT may come as a surprise that despite having large volumes of nutrition information readily available many Australian women still have low iron levels. In fact, as many as one in four women may be experiencing the symptoms of iron deficiency, including extreme fatigue, irritability and low energy. And, contrary to some reports, it is often not those who do not eat red meat who are most likely to have low stores of iron. Rather, sporadic meat eaters who enjoy iron rich beef or lamb just once or twice each week are far more likely to deplete their iron stores over time.

Research has indicated that individuals will feel physical effects of low iron, even if their blood levels are normal but their stores are low.

Iron is present in a wide number of foods including red meat, chicken fish, whole grains and leafy green vegetables, but the amounts of iron absorbed varies widely between foods. Iron found in plant foods is not particularly well absorbed compared to haem iron, found in lean red meat. For individuals who do

not regularly eat any type of meat, chicken or fish, their body will be **much** more used to absorbing iron from plant-based **foods such** as grain bread and **fortified** breakfast cereal. **Meat** eaters though need to make a concerted **effort to** expose their body **to well** absorbed forms of **iron**, even in relatively **small** quantities at least 3-4 times each week to ensure that they give their body's the opportunity to absorbed the iron they need for **optimal** energy production.



<b>IRON IN FOOD</b>	<b>mg iron</b>
200g steak	7.0
1 cup mince	5
1 chicken breast	2.0
Fish fillet	1
½ cup baked beans	2.2
Slice grain bread	1
Breakfast cereal with iron	3
6 oysters	3.5
½ cup spinach	0.6