



Eat iron-rich!

In many cases, iron deficiency is homemade. Play it safe with the right menu.

As part of the red blood cells, iron is essential for the oxygen supply. If it is missing, the heart, brain and muscles in particular suffer. We get tired, limp and unable to concentrate. With the help of iron, the body also produces its energy sources, a kind of battery supply that all organs use and without iron, the liver cannot detoxify, hair cannot grow, skin cannot heal and the immune system cannot build enough defense cells. Even hormone production is paralyzed. In children, brain development also suffers.

Women need more

Our iron needs vary with gender and age. Boys between the ages of 14 and 18 need around 12 milligrams (mg) per day, adult men 10 mg. Because women periodically lose blood, and with it iron, they need more. From puberty about 15 mg daily, pregnant women 30 mg, twice as much, for cell growth and the blood supply to the child and placenta. Competitive athletes, patients who have lost a lot of blood as a result of operations, many senior citizens and people with chronic intestinal inflammation also have an increased need.

Not everything we eat arrives

The body cannot make iron. The only source is food. The good news: Anyone who eats varied and wholesome food seldom slips into an iron deficiency state as a healthy person. However, the body can only absorb part of the food iron (5-15%). In order to get enough, you have to rethink your meal plan and optimize it if necessary.

Not all iron is the same: take two!

Iron is found in animal and vegetable foods, but the body can utilize animal foods three times better.

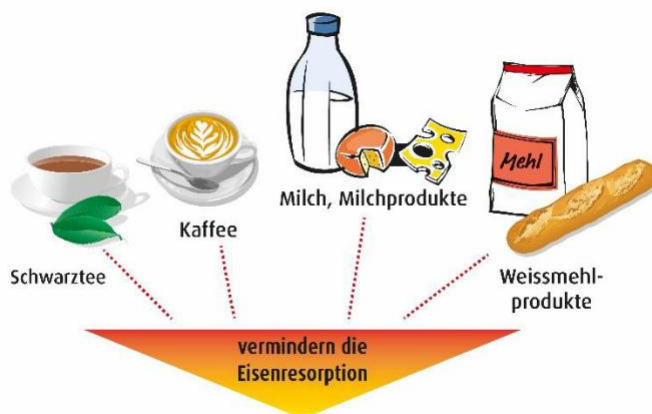
The chemically "divalent" iron (Fe^{2+}) from meat and fish is mainly bound to proteins via the hemoglobin in the blood or the related myoglobin in muscle meat, for which the intestine has special "docking points" (receptors). This also applies to the iron bound in milk protein from milk, cheese and quark. Animal iron is therefore very well absorbed in the intestine and released into the bloodstream for use. In addition, the bivalent iron is very soluble in free form, which is a prerequisite for its transfer into the blood. The unbeatable source of iron No. 1 is therefore red meat.

The vegetable "trivalent" iron (Fe^{3+}) is partly firmly bound to the vegetable carbohydrates and is extremely difficult to dissolve in the intestine. There are no special binding sites for this form of iron. The transporters in the intestinal wall only work with Fe^{2+} . It is true that enzymes convert Fe^{3+} into Fe^{2+} on site. To do this, the iron has to be dissolved, which is difficult. Those who follow a purely plant-based diet therefore need much larger amounts of iron sources to meet their daily needs.

Well combined increases the yield

The actual yield depends not only on the iron source, but also on the composition of the menu. Vitamin C, for example, increases iron absorption in the intestine many times over. Drink a glass of orange juice with your iron-rich meal.

Other substances, on the other hand, inhibit iron absorption and should be consumed at different times. The tannin contained in coffee or black tea binds iron in the digestive tract. It is excreted with instead of entering the bloodstream. Therefore, it is better to drink coffee or cappuccino, black or green tea between meals. Polyphenols (green tea, grape juice), oxalates (spinach, rhubarb, chard), phosphates (Coca Cola), calcium (dairy products) and phytates (whole grains, legumes) also have an unfavorable effect.



Sourdough bacteria break down phytates in whole grains, which is why the intestines can absorb more iron from whole-grain sourdough bread. A fresh sourdough bread with herb quark and a glass of orange juice is therefore a delicious and iron-rich meal.

Also, inform your doctor about everything you take (even without a prescription). Some medications and supplements inhibit iron absorption.

The myth of spinach and liver

Spinach has been praised as a power food for generations of children. In fact, the content in legumes (beans, peas, lentils, peanuts) is significantly higher. And liver? Although it contains higher amounts of iron than red meat, the iron is present in its storage form in trivalent form. If it is released from the food pulp in the intestine, it precipitates as poorly soluble iron and can hardly be absorbed by the intestinal cells. In addition, liver loads the body with many toxins with frequent consumption.

Iron sources

Food	iron (mg/100 g)
Beef, leg	2,6
Pork, shoulder	1,8
Amaranth	9,0
Millet, grain	6,9
Oatmeal, whole grain	4,5
Whole wheat pasta (raw)	3,8
Brown rice, grain	3,2
Whole wheat bread	2,0
Spinach (raw)	4,1
Black salsify (cooked)	2,9
Fennel (raw)	2,7
Lamb's lettuce	2,0
Spring onion	1,9
Arugula	1,5
Strawberries	1,0
Raspberries	1,0
Elder	1,6
Beans, white	6,1
Lentils (dried)	8,0
Chickpeas (dried)	6,1
Tofu	5,4
Pumpkin seeds	12,5
Sesame seeds	10,0
Pistachios	7,3
Sunflower seeds	6,3
Turmeric	41,4
Oysters, mussels	5,8
Sardines	2,5

Source: Keller (DGE 2012); ergänzt

Muesli, meat, salad and stews

The German Nutrition Society recommends 300-600g meat per week and fish once a week. Muesli with a glass of orange juice would be a great way to start the day. Unpeeled cereals (rice, millet, oat flakes, wheat bran), legumes (lentils, beans, peas, peanuts) as well as fresh herbs (e.g. cardamom, parsley, mint) and spices (e.g. cinnamon) also provide a lot of iron. Apricots, nuts, pistachios, sesame seeds, and flax seeds are also good sources of iron. The ingredients can be used to conjure up delicious salads, breads, stews and desserts.

Sometimes the body needs more

If the food iron alone is not enough, e.g. During pregnancy or if there is an existing iron deficiency, it is advisable to take iron supplements for a certain period of time under the guidance of your doctor. "Spilling" is often better than "puddling". If the dosage of iron via the intestines is too high, the body closes its gates and often reacts with nausea and constipation. Constant dripping wears away the stone. After three months the values should be better.

E.g. Liquid preparation without alcohol and preservatives, with vegetables and medicinal herbs. (Floradix® with iron, health food stores and pharmacies). Liquid iron therapeutics are also well suited for seniors who have difficulty swallowing iron tablets. For the trip or the Similar preparations in tablet or dragee form are available for everyday work or for vegans. If there is already an iron deficiency with anemia (anemia), a higher dose iron therapy via infusions is often necessary.

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