

What else can I do?

There are foods you can eat to keep your iron levels from becoming too low. You can add these foods to your diet on top of taking a supplement.

Some foods with high levels of iron:

Type of Food	Examples
Meats	beef, lamb, pork, veal, chicken, turkey
Seafood	fish, clams, oysters, mussels
Enriched grain products	cereal, pasta, bread, crackers, muffins
Legumes	beans, lentils, peas, soybeans
Leafy vegetables	spinach, kale, collard greens, asparagus
Dried fruits	apricots, prunes, raisins

For other ideas of foods with high levels of iron, use this link (tinyurl.com/v9yapd5) or scan this QR code.



There is no need for you to buy and take a vitamin C supplement. We don't know if taking added vitamin C helps absorb more iron. If you wish try adding vitamin C to your diet, eat it at the same time as your iron supplement or other iron rich foods. Some foods with high vitamin C:

- orange
- orange juice
- tomatoes
- kiwis
- broccoli
- cauliflower

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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

Iron Deficiency Anemia in Pregnancy



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It is common to have low levels of iron in your blood during pregnancy. This is because your growing baby uses iron.

When your iron level is too low, your body cannot make enough red blood cells. This is called **iron deficiency anemia**.

If you have iron deficiency anemia, your doctor might prescribe an iron supplement to take during your pregnancy. Some women have severe anemia that can't be corrected by taking an iron supplement. They might need iron diluted in a solution given directly into the vein (intravenous).

What is an iron supplement?

- An iron supplement can be a pill or liquid you take by mouth to increase your iron level.
- You will need a total of 100 to 200 milligrams of elemental iron each day. Elemental iron is the total amount of iron your body can absorb from an iron supplement.
- Different types of iron supplements have different amounts of elemental iron in them. This means you might have to take it more than once a day.

Ferrous gluconate is available as a 300 milligram tablet, but has only 35 milligrams of elemental iron.

Examples of supplements include:

- ferrous gluconate
- ferrous sulfate
- polysaccharide iron complex
- heme iron polypeptide
- ferrous fumarate

What are some of the side effects?

Some side effects include:

- nausea
- vomiting
- stomach pain
- constipation
- diarrhea

If you experience strong side effects, talk to your care provider. You might need to change to a different iron supplement.

What can I do about side effects?

- To start, take your iron supplement with food. This can help keep you from getting an upset stomach.
- Drink enough water to keep you from having constipation (stool is hard to pass or fewer bowel movements than usual).
- There are over the counter medicines you can take if you are constipated. PEG 3350 (*LaxADay*) is recommended for pregnant women. To use:
 - Dissolve 17 grams (1 packet) of PEG 3350 powder in a full glass (250 mL) of water.
 - Drink one time a day until you are no longer constipated.
 - It might take 2 to 4 days of daily use for this medicine to work.

How do I take my iron supplement?

- Your body absorbs the iron better if you take it on an empty stomach.
- You are less likely to have side effects if you gradually increase to the total amount you need over time.
- Iron can bind to some medicines such as levothyroxine. When it does, the medicine does not work. Talk to your care provider if you are taking other medicines.
- Dairy products (such as milk, cheese and yogurt) make it hard for your body to absorb iron. If you eat these foods, take your supplement either 2 hours before or 4 hours afterwards.

How to take **ferrous gluconate 300 mg**:

Take 1 tab of ferrous gluconate at these times.			
	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
The first 3 to 5 days			✓
If you have little to no side effects, then the next 3 to 5 days	✓		✓
If you have little to no side effects, then the next 3 to 5 days	✓	✓	✓
Still feeling okay?	Take your supplement between meals, on an empty stomach with water.		

If you have side effects, move back up a step. If side effects get worse or don't go away, talk to your care provider.