IRON

• Iron is essential for transporting oxygen around the body. It also plays a key role in immune function.
• There are two types of iron: haem and non-haem. Haem iron comes from animal foods and is more easily absorbed than non-haem iron, which comes mostly from plant foods.
• Consuming haem iron at the same time as non-haem iron increases non-haem iron absorption.
• Vitamin C (e.g. citrus fruit, tomato, capsicum) increases iron absorption when consumed with iron containing foods.
• Calcium (e.g. dairy foods), tea and coffee, wine and phytates (e.g. wholegrains) hinder iron absorption. Try to consume these foods at alternative times to high-iron foods.

How much do I need?

Women require far more iron than men throughout their reproductive years due to blood loss during menstruation. During pregnancy, iron requirements increase even further. Children and adolescents also have high iron requirements to fuel their growing bodies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male (mg per day)</th>
<th>Female (mg per day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>11 (27 if pregnant, 10 if lactating)</td>
<td>15 (27 if pregnant, 10 if lactating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18 (27 if pregnant, 10 if lactating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What if I don’t get enough?

Symptoms of iron deficiency include:
• Tiredness
• Dizziness
• Pale skin
• Breathlessness
• Rapid/irregular heartbeat

High Iron foods

**HAEM IRON**

- Lean red meat = 2.3mg per 100g (raw)
- Canned sardines = 2.3mg per 100g (raw)
- Salmon = 1.1mg per 100g (raw)
- Pork = 0.7mg per 100g (raw)
- Barramundi = 0.6mg per 100g (raw)
- Skinless chicken breast = 0.4mg per 100g (raw)

**NON-HAEM IRON**

- Weet-Bix = 3mg per 2 biscuits
- Firm tofu = 2.9mg per 100g
- Wholemeal bread with grains and seeds = 2.5mg per 2 slices
- Rolled oats = 2.1mg per half cup
- Eggs = 1.8mg per 2 large eggs
- Spinach = 1.6mg per 50g (raw)
- Raw unsalted cashews = 1.5mg per 30g
- Canned chickpeas = 1.4mg per half cup
- Dried apricots = 0.9mg per 30g
- Pepitas = 3mg per 30g
- Chia seeds = 0.8mg per 10g
- Brown lentils = 3.6mg per 150g (cooked)