



Importance of Iron

Are You Getting Enough?

Have you been feeling extra tired lately? Are you having a difficult time concentrating at work? If so, you might be low in iron, especially if you are a woman.

Iron is a mineral that is essential in our body. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains that iron is part of the protein hemoglobin that carries oxygen from our lungs throughout our body and helps our muscles with the storage and usage of oxygen. Iron is also a part of the enzymes which helps our body digest food.

Too little iron in the body leads to iron deficiency, which can be particularly concerning for young children (between six months and three years of age) and pregnant women as they are experiencing rapid fetal growth and require more iron. Adolescent girls and women of childbearing age are also at risk for iron deficiency due to menstruation. In fact, C-Health reports that in Canada, approximately 20% of women, 50% of pregnant women, and 3% of men are iron deficient. Overall, two out of 1,000 people experience this condition.

Whether or not you belong to the above mentioned groups, it is vital to know that most physical signs and symptoms of iron deficiency do not appear unless iron deficiency anemia is present. The CDC

cautions you to pay attention to the following signs and symptoms associated with iron deficiency anemia:

- Increase in fatigue and weakness
- Decrease in performance at work and school
- Slow cognitive and social development during childhood
- Poor ability to maintain body temperature
- Decline in immune function i.e. experiencing more infection
- Inflammation of the tongue

Iron deficiency can be prevented by consuming a diet that includes good sources of iron such as lean meats, grain products that are fortified with iron, milk and milk products as well as fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C is known to help absorb food that contains non-heme iron (found in non-meat based foods, such as grains, lentils, beans, and vegetables, etc).

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Source: C-Health (chealth.canoe.ca)

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GROUP BENEFITS