

## **IRON**

**Often in pregnancy, women have trouble meeting the suggested 30 mg of dietary iron per day. Below are some suggestions for increasing the amount of iron you get from your diet. Also are some suggestions for herbs that are rich in iron, and on over-the-counter iron tablets.**

**One simple thing you can do to increase the amount of iron you get from your diet is to cook in cast iron pots! Stews and sauces that cook for a long time and are acidic (ie: tomato sauce) will work the best, but any food cooked in a cast iron pot will have more iron in it. You may even be able to double the amount of iron in some foods, such as eggs, by cooking in cast iron pots.**

**Combining iron rich foods with food rich in vitamin C will help your body absorb the iron you eat. Some foods rich in vitamin C are citrus fruits, yellow and orange vegetables and rose hip tea. Heme iron is the iron found in meats, and non-heme iron is found plants also. Vegetarians-don't despair! Your body is certainly capable of absorbing iron from plants without eating meat-this is a matter of degree. Eating varied iron rich foods each day adds up.**

### **IRON RICH FOODS**

**Excellent sources (greater than 6-7 mg of iron per serving)**

- prune juice (a great source-one cup has 1.5 mg of iron!)
- beans--garbanzo, black, lima, navy, pinto, soy, split peas, lentils, peanuts, etc.
- meat sources--liver, red meats, egg yolks, shrimp, oysters

**Good sources (3-6 mg of iron per serving)**

- blackstrap molasses
- dark green leafy vegetables-collards, dandelion, beet greens, chard, mustard greens, kale, spinach, etc.
- dried fruits--prunes, dried apricots, raisins, dates, dried peaches

**Fair sources (less than 3 mg of iron per serving)**

- brussels sprouts, butternut squash, acorn squash, almonds, artichokes, peas, pumpkin seeds, seaweeds(hijiki, kelp, etc.), strawberries, tomatoes and tomato juice, wheat germ and wheat bran, whole grain foods (unprocessed, such as millet, wheat berries, whole wheat, oatmeal, sesame meal), potatoes

**Other sources of iron are herbs and iron tablets.**

## **HERBALS AND HERBS**

**Floradix:** a liquid iron herbal preparation available in health food stores. Take two teaspoons once or twice each day. Expensive, but liquid and not constipating.

**Yellow Dock:** 2 ounces dried yellow dock roots, 4 Tablespoons honey. Put the roots into a quart and fill completely with boiling water, cap well. Infuse for eight hours or overnight. Strain plant material out and discard. Steam liquid over a very low flame until reduced to one cup. Do not boil or simmer. Pour boiling hot into a very clean jar. Cap. Cool. Store in refrigerator. Take one or two tablespoons daily. (Tastes bitter, this is why you reduce the liquid and add the honey). From Susan Weed's Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year.

**Dandelion:** Makes a wonderful salad prepared lightly steamed and tossed with vinaigrette.

**Fennel:** Makes a crunchy, sweet salad with licorice undertones; great combined with lentils.

**Alfalfa:** May take up to two alfalfa tablets after each meal. Do NOT take alfalfa tablets if you have a history of blood clots or if you are currently taking heparin.

## **IRON TABLETS**

**Accidental injestion of iron supplements can kill a child!** Always store iron tablets in childproof containers and out of reach. Take only as much iron as your midwife suggests. More is not necessarily better. All iron tablets can be constipating. Drink at least 10 cups of fluid each day and eat lots of vegetables and fruits to help prevent constipation.

**Ferrous Sulfate--**This inexpensive tablet is easily found in any pharmacy. The usual dose is 325 mg once or twice a day. If you take this form of iron, start by taking one tablet each day with juice or water, never with milk. If your midwife has told you to take your iron twice each day, after three or four days begin taking the second tablet at different time during the day.

**Ferrous Gluconate--** Can also be found in most pharmacies. The usual dose is 325 mg once or twice each day. Again, always take this tablet with juice or water, never with milk.

**SlowFe--** Micronized iron for easier digestion. This iron usually does not upset your stomach or cause constipation. However, since it is not as well absorbed as other iron tablets, it is very important to remember to take it every day and to take it for longer periods of time. As with the other iron tablets, take SlowFe with juice or water, never with milk.