



Celebrating **Older Americans Month** this May!

# 2ND HELPING

Just a Little More Help from **United Way Meals on Wheels**

April 2025

## Is There Enough Iron in Your Diet?

### Iron Is Essential to Maintaining Strength and Healthy Blood

An iron deficiency, including anemia, is fairly common among older adults and it can leave you feeling tired, weak and lightheaded. A proper diet is key to getting enough iron and keeping you at your best. Here's a quick rundown of why iron is so important, as well as some good ways to get it.

▪ **It's in Your Blood**

Your body uses iron to produce red blood cells, hemoglobin and myoglobin, which carry oxygen to every part of your body. Hemoglobin supplies oxygen to your organs and myoglobin feeds your muscles. So iron is essential to keep your body functioning normally.

▪ **Know the Signs of Iron Deficiency/Anemia**

When your body doesn't get as much oxygen as it needs, you're likely to experience: fatigue and weakness; headaches; shortness of breath; dizziness; pale skin; or difficulty concentrating.

▪ **Reasons for Deficiency**

You have to get iron from food. And you need a steady supply because red blood cells must be constantly replenished. So if your diet is short on iron, you might be, too. But a deficiency can also be caused by poor absorption of iron -- sometimes resulting from gastrointestinal disorders and antacids. And, if you happen to be low on Vitamin B12, that could also be a reason.

▪ **Good Sources of Iron**

Most older adults need about 8 milligrams of iron per day (ask your doctor about your specific needs). Some of the best sources are: lean meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, beans, lentils, fortified cereals, dark green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds and dried fruits.

▪ **Iron Absorption**

It's worth noting that animal sources of iron are more easily absorbed than plant sources. And consuming iron in combination with foods high in vitamin C, such as citrus fruit, bell pepper and broccoli, improves absorption while consuming high amounts of calcium can inhibit absorption.

▪ **Final Fun Fact**

Some research shows that cooking in an iron skillet can actually increase the iron content of food.

Source: silversneakers.com

Questions for Meals on Wheels? Call (205) 592-0413. To be screened for other senior services, call 1-800-AGE-LINE.

Remove lower portion and return with your kind donation.

**YES!** I'll support Meals on Wheels so that even more people can look forward to nutritious meals and friendly visits. My tax-deductible contribution is enclosed in the amount of:

\_\_\_\$10    \_\_\_\$25    \_\_\_\$50    \_\_\_\$100    \_\_\_Other \$\_\_\_\_\_^^

Please make checks payable to Meals on Wheels and mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



P.O. Box 320189  
Birmingham, AL 35232-0189  
205.592.0413

You may also donate online at [www.mowjeffco.org/give](http://www.mowjeffco.org/give).

CSH-04/25