

How to Choose an Iron Supplement

There are iron supplements you can buy without a prescription.

If your health care provider has told you to take an iron supplement, here is some information. This may help you make the best choice.

THE TYPE OF PRODUCT TO LOOK FOR IS “FERROUS SULFATE”

Ferrous Sulfate is a form of iron. It is easily used by the body to make red blood cells and build up iron stores. It is the recommended form of iron supplements.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AT THE STORE?

TABLETS OR CAPSULES - whether you buy tablets or capsules, always check these things:

1. Ask if the store sells ferrous sulfate from a bulk supply. This is usually the most economical form.
2. Look for a generic product or a “store brand” of ferrous sulfate. The label may show this as Fe SO₄ which means ferrous sulfate.
3. “Timed-release” capsules are more expensive and not necessary!

CLINIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. We recommend that you take about 300 mg. of supplemental iron two times a day. Different brands come in various strengths. If you have questions about the daily dosage, ask the pharmacist for help.
2. Take iron medicine before meals. If they upset your stomach, take with food (other than dairy products, tea, eggs, or antacids).
3. Vitamin C is a nutrient that helps the body to use iron better. Vitamin C sources include orange juice, strawberries, cantaloupe, broccoli, green peppers, cauliflower, baked potato.
4. Call for a blood recheck appointment in _____ months.

When taking iron medicine, you will notice dark bowel movements and may experience constipation. If constipation develops, drink more water and eat more raw fruits, vegetables, and bran.

If you have **SICKLE-CELL** disease, **DO NOT** take iron medicine unless your family doctor tells you to do so.

Iron pills are **VERY HARMFUL TO SMALL CHILDREN**. Keep your iron pills **AWAY** from children!

WHAT MAKES YOU RUN OUT OF IRON?

You lose iron by:

Having a baby
Having heavy periods
Having an IUD with heavy bleeding
Giving whole blood
Losing a lot of blood
Poor diet low in iron rich foods

You need to replace iron by:

Taking iron medicine
Eating foods that have iron

Foods High in Iron:

Iron-fortified cereal
Meat: liver, beef, pork
Sardines
Spinach
Dried beans/peas
Lentils
Oatmeal
Molasses
Raisins

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