

Boost Your Blood Count

Low Hematocrit—It's A Common Challenge

If you have been temporarily deferred as a blood donor because of a low hematocrit or blood count, please try to donate again. In many cases a simple change in your diet is all that it takes to increase your hematocrit enough to be able to donate. A low hematocrit is the number one reason people are deferred from blood donation in Central Texas.

Iron, when combined with certain proteins, becomes hemoglobin in the red blood cells. The hematocrit is a measure of the amount of hemoglobin in your blood and it can change from day to day based on your diet and other factors. Hemoglobin carries oxygen to the body's tissues.

The average adult male requires 10 mg of iron daily, while the average adult female requires 18 mg a day. Iron is especially important in a woman's diet because her monthly loss of hemoglobin depletes her body's iron supply. Half of all women of childbearing age get less iron than the United States Recommended Daily Allowance (USRDA), and 5% suffer from iron deficient anemia.

Iron-rich foods help promote blood regeneration. The table below gives the iron content of some common foods. You can increase the amount of iron your body absorbs by eating foods and/or drinking juices high in Vitamin C along with ones rich in iron. Drinking caffeinated beverages like tea and coffee during and after meals decreases iron absorption and should be avoided.

Iron Rich Foods

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	MG OF IRON
Clams	3 oz	12 - 24 mg
Oysters	3 oz	6 - 12 mg
Liver	3 oz	7 - 8 mg
Lean Beef	3 oz	3 - 5 mg
Beans	1/2 Cup	1 - 2 mg
Lean Pork	3 oz	1 - 2 mg
Spinach	1/2 Cup, cooked	2 mg
Raisins	1/2 Cup	2 mg
Dried Apricots	1/2 Cup	2 mg
Dried Prunes	10	2 mg
Pasta	1 Cup	2 mg
Tuna, canned	3 oz	2 mg
Chicken	3 oz	1 - 2 mg
Fish	3 oz	1 mg
Enriched bread	1 slice	1 mg