

IRON INFORMATION

- a somewhat complex molecule but vital for the proper transport of oxygen to muscles, as it's present in the blood in hemoglobin. More of an issue with women, as they lose blood monthly and also some tend to eat less natural meat sources compared to men.

ABSORPTION is KEY: calcium and tannin (present in tea and coffee) prevent iron absorption, therefore never take an iron supplement with milk, tea or coffee.

Also antacids, vitamin E and the antibiotic tetracycline (used with acne).

Also higher intensity workouts, and contact slightly decrease iron absorption and therefore if you're really low in serum ferritin doing non-impact and lower-intensity work for several weeks helps make the return to normal quicker.

Vitamin C HELPS iron absorption, therefore taking iron on an empty stomach with orange juice (that is not fortified with calcium) will help as well!

SUPPLEMENTATION: If you are diagnosed anaemic (serum ferritin of less than about 12 or 15 for men and less than 20 for women) You should be looking to try and get a total of 75-100 mg of elemental iron per day right now (this is much more than you normally need per day, which is around 15-20mg per day) and is probably 3 to 4 pills worth. Supplementation will can, and probably will, cause some GI discomfort and some pretty nasty looking feces (very dark and almost black sometimes). Have blood work done in about 4-6 weeks to see where your ferritin has progressed to.

NATURAL SOURCES: research has shown the natural sources actually offer a higher bioavailability of iron than supplementation. Also, the body is better at absorbing heme iron (from animal sources) than non-heme iron (from plant sources).

Sources: lean red meat, dark-meat poultry, dried beans, whole grains, enriched grain products, leafy green vegetables like spinach. In fact, beef liver has the most concentrated source of iron, but not many people like eating liver. Fortified cereals with iron are great, but NOT WITH MILK...maybe with soy milk that isn't fortified with calcium.