

## Iron Checklist

By Jan Purser

Iron is an essential mineral for good health. It is vital for carrying oxygen around the body to all the cells for energy production. It also plays a role in enzyme reactions in the various body systems.

If you experience two or more of these symptoms below speak to your nutritionist, naturopath, or GP about having an iron studies test carried out. If you know you have chronically low iron, you may benefit from: hair tissue mineral analysis testing, a helicobacter pylori test; and a coeliac disease screen blood test to check for possible underlying causes.

Here are the symptoms you might suffer if you are deficient:

1. Fatigue
2. Dizziness
3. Poor immune function - colds, sinusitis, ear infections, mouth ulcers, thrush
4. Restless legs syndrome
5. Depression
6. Headaches
7. Pimples
8. Itchy skin
9. Corners of the mouth crack
10. Hair loss
11. Brittle nails
12. Sore tongue
13. Heavy periods
14. Unusually tired after exercise

Good food sources of iron include: mussels, clams, oysters, red meat, dried apricots, lentils, liver, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seed kernels, tofu, parsley and chicken thigh and leg meat (richer in iron than breast meat), fish, nuts, tahini and tempeh. To improve iron absorption, include a vitamin C rich food with your meals such as lemon juice, broccoli, raw capsicum, strawberries or kiwi fruit to name a few.

Iron is a mineral you should not self prescribe as excess iron creates its own set of problems. See your practitioner for advise first and adjust your diet to include these great sources of iron foods. You may need a supplement for a time to boost your iron reserves, especially if you avoid any of the foods on this list.

**Jan Purser** is a high profile naturopathic nutritionist, food and health writer, and award-winning author. Jan practices at Remède in Mosman Park and has a passion for helping people resolve digestive disorders, manage weight problems, improve thyroid and hormone health, improve health outcomes in autism and ADHD, and prevent metabolic syndrome. She calls on her wealth of clinical experience and extensive research when spreading the word on good health, great eating and living with vitality.



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