



**FLORIDA'S**  
**BLOOD CENTERS**  
LOCAL HEROES **SAVING LIVES**

## Low Hemoglobin (Iron Deficiency)

Prior to donating, your phlebotomist will check your hemoglobin level. If this count is too low, you will not be allowed to donate. This is called being “deferred” and about 10% of people who attempt to donate are deferred because of a low blood count.

Iron is a mineral that is necessary for the production of hemoglobin (the primary component of red blood cells). In the blood, these cells carry oxygen from your lungs to all parts of your body. When your body does not have enough iron it is called iron deficiency. Having an iron deficiency means less red blood cells are produced by your body. Therefore, less oxygen is transported from your lungs, making you feel tired.

Even though you were not allowed to donate on a particular day due to low hemoglobin levels, this is usually a temporary condition. One simple measure you can take to raise your level is to eat more iron rich foods. If you are unable to include more iron rich food in your diet, check with your physician about a possible iron supplement.

Meats are some of the best sources of iron, including beef, organ meats, pork, poultry, fish, clams, and oysters. Other foods rich in iron include dried beans and peas, iron-fortified cereals, bread, pasta products, dark green leafy vegetables (chard, spinach, mustard greens, kale), dried fruits, nuts, and seeds.



**SEE REVERSE FOR DETAILED LIST OF IRON RICH FOODS**

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## Iron-Rich Foods

On average, a woman needs 18 mg. iron a day and a man needs 10 mg. See the table below for a basic reference for iron rich foods.

	<b>Food:</b>	<b>Amount:</b>	<b>Avg. Mg. Iron:</b>
<b>GRAINS</b>	Bread (white or whole wheat)	1 slice	0.5
	Bran muffin	1	1.5
	English muffin	1	1.5-1.9
	Tortillas	1	1
	Cooked cereal	1/2 cup	0.7
	Dry cereal	3/4 cup	read label
	Wheat germ	1/2 cup	4
<b>MEAT</b>	Organ meats	3 oz.	7
	Liver	3 oz.	8-9
	Liver sausage	3 oz.	4-6
	Shellfish	3 oz.	4-5
	Red meats	3 oz.	4
	Fish and poultry	3 oz.	2-3
<b>MEAT SUBSTITUTES</b>	Tofu	4 oz.	2.3
	Sunflower seeds	1 oz.	2
	Pumpkin seeds	1 oz.	3.2
	Cooked dry peas (beans, lentils, lima beans)	1/2 cup	2-3
	Egg	1	1
	Nuts	1/3 cup	0.5-2.0
	Peanut butter	1 tbsp.	0.3
<b>FRUITS &amp; JUICES</b>	Watermelon	6" x 1/2" slice	3
	Strawberries	1 cup	1.5
	Banana	1 cup	1
	Raisins, dates, prunes	1/2 cup	3-4
	Figs, Apricots	1/2 cup	3-4
	Prune juice	3/4 cup	7.4
	Tomato juice	3/4 cup	1.6
	Apple juice	3/4 cup	1.1
<b>VEGETABLES</b>	Cooked dark leafy greens (spinach, collards, kale)	1/2 cup	3
	Raw dark leafy greens (spinach, collards, kale)	1 cup	2
	Jicama	1/3 cup	0.8
<b>FAST FOODS</b>	Pizza (cheese or pepperoni)	1/2 of 10"	4.5-5.4
	Hamburger	1 reg.	2.5
	Cheeseburger	1 reg.	2.5
	Beef burrito	1	4.6
	Bean burrito	1	2.8
	Beef taco	1	2.9