



HÉMA-QUÉBEC

# ABOUT IRON

Iron is essential for the human body. It is one of the components of hemoglobin, a protein contained in blood that transports oxygen from the lungs to the organs. An iron deficiency can deprive the body of the oxygen it needs. It is therefore important to consume a sufficient amount of iron-rich foods, especially if you are giving blood.

## IRON-RICH FOODS

### VEGETABLE-BASED



- **Dried fruit**  
(e.g., apricots, prunes and raisins)
- **Legumes**  
(especially Lima beans)
- **Leafy greens**  
(e.g., spinach, broccoli, parsley and green vegetables)
- **Nuts**
- **Dark molasses**
- **Whole grain cereal**
- **Iron-enriched foods**  
(e.g., several breads and cereals—check labels)

### ANIMAL-BASED



- **Liver and other red meats**
- **Seafood and fish** (e.g., sardines)

The iron contained in meat is the one best absorbed by the body.

To maximize iron absorption, eat a small amount of meat and other foods containing iron (e.g., vegetables) in the same meal. Foods rich in vitamin C (e.g., oranges) also improve iron absorption if consumed during the same meal.

Conversely, tea, coffee, eggs, milk, fibres and soy protein should be avoided when eating iron-rich foods since they hinder iron absorption.

A low hemoglobin level is not necessarily related to insufficient iron consumption. Consult your family physician to determine the exact cause.