

DIETARY IRON & HHT



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS — IRON DEFICIENCY

EXERCISE LIMITATION / FATIGUE

RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME

HAIR LOSS

MYALGIAS

DECREASED ATTENTION SPAN

*SEE ANEMIA AND IRON DEFICIENCY
FACTSHEET FOR ADDITIONAL SIGNS &
SYMPTOMS*

FACTSHEET
FS

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SOME IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT HHT ARE:

Iron deficiency is a common and important manifestation of HHT. Lack of iron makes it harder to produce red blood cells (RBCs), has symptoms similar to anemia, and makes anemia more likely to occur with active bleeding as the body will not have the necessary iron available to replace the lost RBCs. Approximately 50% of patients with HHT develop anemia. However, many patients can be iron deficient but not anemic.

There are many iron-rich foods that can help increase iron absorption. An iron-rich diet can help offset iron deficiencies, but it's also important to know which foods can prevent iron from being absorbed.


The Cornerstone of
the HHT Community

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HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN:

If you have any of the listed signs and symptoms.

Tips on how to track your symptoms and pinpoint foods that trigger or worsen your symptoms.

Dietary changes and sample meal plans.

Any medications you are prescribed that could interact with iron supplements.

If you should also be tested for anemia.

Iron deficiency is having too little iron in the body. The body needs iron for growth and development, and uses it to create red blood cells. **Oral iron supplement** and **dietary changes** can relieve the symptoms of iron deficiency. **Dietary changes alone often will not make a strong impact for someone who is actively bleeding.**

Dietary Iron refers to iron that can be found in the foods you eat. There are two types of iron from food—**heme** and **non-heme**. Heme iron is found in foods such as oysters, beef, duck, lamb, and seafood. Non-heme iron is found in foods such as legumes (beans), lentils, pumpkin seeds, and soybeans.

Certain foods can also prevent iron absorption. Consumption of phytates, polyphenols, and calcium all can prevent absorption in the body. These nutrients are found in whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds. However, they can be removed by milling, heating, soaking, fermenting, and sprouting. Some are also found in tea, red wine, fruit, vegetables, spices, egg, milk, and soy.

DIETARY IRON VS. IRON SUPPLEMENTS

Dietary iron = 21 mg of iron eaten, but only 0.8-4.7 mg is absorbed in the body.

Iron supplement = 100mg iron ingested, but only 2.0-20mg is absorbed in the body.

Many people with iron deficiency anemia and HHT are prescribed iron supplements. These supplements can interact with other medications.

NON-HEME VS. HEME IRON SUPPLEMENTS

For **non-heme iron** supplements, absorption may be decreased if taken with dairy or beverages such as tea and coffee. Doctors recommend taking these supplements on an empty stomach if possible and one hour before, or two hours after, taking these foods. Vitamin C also helps with absorption, so it is recommended that these supplements be taken with a glass of orange juice or a vitamin C tablet.

Heme iron supplements are not affected by dairy, tea or coffee. They generally do not have the gastrointestinal side-effects that non-heme supplements may have.

It may be helpful to take iron supplements in the **morning** and not at night, as experts say iron absorption is highest in the morning. Some studies have shown that taking iron supplements **every other day** can increase the efficacy of taking them.

PREPARING A HIGH-IRON DIET

Include:

- > At least 1 iron-rich food
- > 1 vitamin c-rich food with each meal
- > Cooked beans/lentils to soups, stews, bakes
- > Cereals and flours fortified with iron
- > Dark green and orange vegetables
- > Dried fruit and nuts/seeds as a snack or recipe add-in

Iron-rich foods

Bell peppers

Citrus Fruit

Dark green vegetables

Kiwi

Strawberries

Cantaloupe

Cabbage

Meat (liver)



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