



BE SAFE **Fe** BE IRON STRONG !

NO TRIP TO THE GYM REQUIRED. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE IRON IN YOUR BODY.

We truly appreciate that you support your community through blood donation. For people needing blood for surgeries, organ transplants or cancer treatment, your donation is priceless. Just like you take care of others by donating blood, we want to take care of you. Your good health is important to us.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IRON, ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Iron. Your body—and everybody—needs it. Iron is an essential mineral that helps move oxygen to all organs, muscles and tissues in your body. It helps turn food into energy. Your good health depends on iron, just like we depend on you as a blood donor.

Recent studies involving young blood donors indicate that keeping your iron "stores" adequate – so that your body can quickly replace your red blood cells after a donation – can be a challenge. This is especially true for women, whose bodies require more iron. Unlike adults, young donors have not yet stored extra iron over the years to fall back on.

That's why every time you donate we measure your **hematocrit: how many red blood cells you have in circulation.** Your hematocrit normally remains at a set point unless (or until) your stored iron becomes depleted. We want to prevent you from ever experiencing depleted iron stores.

In the days and weeks after you donate, your body naturally absorbs iron to replace what is lost. Once your iron stores are replaced, your body stops absorbing iron – to prevent having too much iron in the body.



DID YOU KNOW?

IRON IS ESSENTIAL IN TURNING FOOD INTO ENERGY IN YOUR MITOCHONDRIA, AS WELL AS CARRYING OXYGEN IN YOUR BLOOD CELLS.



FeED YOUR BODY

BE IRON SMART!

FORTUNATELY, THERE'S A COUPLE OF WAYS TO KEEP YOUR IRON STORES IN BALANCE: THROUGH A NUTRITIOUS DIET, AND BY TAKING IRON SUPPLEMENTS.

FOOD THAT PUMPS UP IRON

The best way to boost your iron level is to eat a healthy diet, with plenty of iron-rich foods. These include **beans, nuts, seeds, dark leafy greens, root vegetables, dried fruits, enriched and whole grain breads, lean red meats, shellfish, whole grains, and eggs.** You can maintain healthy iron levels by eating regular, nutritionally balanced meals, and drink plenty of fluids.

Meats have the highest iron content, so vegetarians have to work harder to get enough iron, but still have lots of good food choices. And even cooking in an iron skillet adds iron to whatever you are making. Some foods and beverages can decrease iron absorption, including caffeine (coffee, tea, colas) so focusing on healthy eating is important.

IRON SUPPLEMENTS ALSO INCREASE YOUR IRON LEVEL

In addition to a healthy diet, iron supplements or vitamins containing iron are strongly recommended. They are safe, can be taken daily to keep your iron stores in balance.

Iron supplements are also widely available in many forms over-the-counter at drug stores or pharmacies. Iron is included in many multi-vitamins, too. Having vitamin C along with iron increases your body's absorption of iron – things like orange juice, citrus fruits, tomatoes, cantaloupe and strawberries.

BLOODWORKS NORTHWEST HAS IRON SUPPLEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR YOU FREE-OF-CHARGE AT ALL OF OUR DONATION CENTERS FOR PICK UP. WE WILL ALSO MAIL IRON SUPPLEMENTS TO YOUR HOME. YOUR PARENTS JUST HAVE TO COMPLETE AN ONLINE REQUEST FORM AT [BLOODWORKSNW.ORG/IRON](https://bloodworksnw.org/iron).

> As you should with any supplement, please read the label carefully. If you have a family history of hemochromatosis or symptoms of inflammatory bowel disease, you should not take iron supplements. The supplements may change your absorption rate for other medicines you might take, like antibiotics taken for acne. Your healthcare provider can tell you if iron supplements are right for you.

To find out more about iron and blood donation:

[Bloodworksnw.org/iron](https://bloodworksnw.org/iron)

Or call and one of our nurses will be happy to help you:

(206) 398-5999



THANK YOU AGAIN FOR BEING AN AMAZING BLOOD DONOR!

Bloodworks depends on your generosity and commitment to support local patients who depend on lifesaving transfusions. In return, we strive to do all we can to support you.

