

## The Importance of Iron

Absorption of iron occurs within four hours of eating. Since our bodies sometimes need help maintaining a sufficient iron reserve, it is very important to add iron-rich foods to your diet to keep your iron level adequate for donation.

### Meat and Meat Substitutes

Lean red meats (beef, lamb, pork, veal)

Organ meats (liver, gizzards)

Poultry

Eggs

Seafood

Nuts

Beans

### Fruits and Vegetables

Dark green, leafy vegetables

Beans (green, lima, peas)

Root vegetables (beets, white potato)

Cauliflower

Sprouts (beans, alfalfa)

Artichokes

Dried fruit (dates, prunes, raisins)

### Breads and Cereals

Enriched, fortified and whole-grain breads

Cereal

Grains (oats, wheat, bran)

Wild rice

Macaroni

## Helpful Hints

- Caffeine (coffee, tea and cola), high-fiber cellulose food (celery), and some antacid medications may decrease iron absorption.
  - Dairy products will also decrease the absorption of iron.
- Increase iron absorption by including food and drinks high in vitamin C (fruit and fruit juice) along with the iron rich food.
- The best rule is to eat regular, nutritionally balanced meals, and drink plenty of fluids.