Eat Iron-Rich Foods

How to pump up those red blood cells

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About 10 million people in the United States are iron deficient, and half this number have been diagnosed with anemia, a resulting health condition. In addition, African Americans, along with women of reproductive age (including those who are pregnant), children and the elderly are at higher risk of developing this illness.

Often, the treatment for insufficient iron is a no-brainer: Eat more foods naturally rich in this essential mineral, such as red meat, pork, poultry, seafood, beans, leafy greens and dried fruit, or foods fortified with iron, such as certain cereals, breads, pastas and peas. To help the body absorb iron, folks should up their intake of foods containing vitamin C. (Be aware, too, that foods such as dairy products, eggs, coffee, cocoa and some nuts and seeds can inhibit iron absorption.)

Doctors may also recommend over-the-counter iron supplements. Be sure to follow your physician’s advice about the correct dosage, form and best practices for ingesting these supplements.

Then have your iron levels reassessed via blood work, and pursue any follow-up treatment needed.

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