

Food has two types of iron — heme and non-heme iron. Heme iron is found in meat, fish and poultry. It is the form of iron that is most readily absorbed by your body. You absorb up to 30 percent of the heme iron that you consume. Eating meat generally boosts your iron levels far more than eating non-heme iron. Non-heme iron is found in plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables and nuts. Foods with non-heme iron are still an important part of a nutritious, well-balanced diet, but the iron contained in these foods won't be absorbed as completely. You absorb between two and 10 percent of the non-heme iron that you consume. When you eat heme iron with foods higher in non-heme iron, the iron will be more completely absorbed by your body. Foods high in vitamin C — like tomatoes, citrus fruits and red, yellow and orange peppers — can also help with the absorption of non-heme iron. The amount and type of iron in your diet is important. Some iron-rich foods are: