

IRON SUPPLEMENTATION FOR ANEMIA

An iron deficiency called anemia is a common occurrence among pregnant women. Especially in severe cases, such a deficiency will lead to negative effects, which include infant mortality, maternal mortality, and premature birth. Pregnant women will also feel lousy, dizzy, light-headed, and tired when the iron is at a low level. Iron also helps in maintaining your immune system, which is important to have defense from a number of illnesses that can commonly happen during pregnancy. It is also important in the production of enzymes and collagen, a protein that is present in the connective tissues.

How Much Iron Do You Need?

For women who are not pregnant, 18 milligrams of iron is the recommended daily dosage. When you are pregnant, however, you need to have at least 27 milligrams of iron. This is because iron is not only needed by the pregnant woman, but by the baby in the placenta as well. As the iron requirement increases in the second half of pregnancy, you may want to aim for 30-50 mg of iron.

Iron supplements should be taken 1-2 hours before or after meals and with a small glass of orange juice to increase absorption. Do not take it with your prenatal vitamin or with dairy products as the calcium will decrease absorption of the iron.

Can You Have Too Much Iron?

Iron toxicity is only an issue among adults who consume more than 1,000 mg of iron daily. It can lead to diarrhea and constipation. If you go beyond the 27mg of iron that is recommended daily, as long as it is not too much above, the only thing that can happen is that the iron will no longer be absorbed by the body.

How to Choose an Iron Supplement for Pregnancy

There are many options available. As you shop:

- Look at the dosage of the iron supplement. Remember, you will need to have 27 mg of iron in a day. However, take note that you will not only get it from the supplement, but also from food intake. This is why even lower doses for a supplement will be fine, as long as you take food rich in iron as well.
- Be familiar with the different forms of iron supplements that are available, such as capsules, tablet, and liquid. Look at the label and look for one that can be easily absorbed by the body. A slow-release form will also be a great choice.
- As much as possible, look for a supplement that contains multiple vitamins that will support a healthy pregnancy, not just iron. Vitamin C is one of the most important, since it will help in the improvement of iron absorption.
- Before you decide which to buy, you also need to be familiar with the different forms of iron that are present in the supplement, such as elemental iron, ferrous sulfate, and ferrous fumarate, among others. Your provider can help you decide which will be best to try for your body's needs.
 - The equivalent of 60 mg of elemental iron is 300 mg ferrous sulfate heptahydrate, 180 mg ferrous fumarate or 500 mg of ferrous gluconate

Here are some brand names to compare and try:

- SlowFe. With this supplement, you will get 45 mg of elemental iron, which is equal to 142 mg of ferrous sulfate. This supplement has great potency and is also easy to swallow. It has a controlled-release system, which means it will be able to deliver iron slowly, minimizing possible side effects.
- FerroSequels High Potency. This supplement provides 65 mg of iron and includes Vitamin C, which will provide a boost for your immune system. It also is timed-release to deliver iron slowly to maximize absorption and minimize upset stomach. It is low in sodium and gluten-free.
- Floradix. This supplement comes in both liquid and tablet form, so you can decide which your body will tolerate better.
- Nature's Plus chewable. If you prefer a supplement you can chew, this one provides potent iron as well as Vitamin C.