

FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

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Let's keep the blood flowing!

Did you know... Anemia affects almost 17% of older adults.

Learn more on page 2!

What you eat affects many parts of your body, including your blood health. Your blood carries oxygen and essential nutrients to all of your organs. Your blood does some other very important things such as controlling bleeding, fighting infections, and regulating your body temperature.

Just like other organs in your body, your blood requires the right nutrients to run efficiently. One of the nutrients your blood needs to work correctly is iron. Low iron levels are common in older adults and may occur more frequently with age. When you do not eat enough foods with iron or your body is not adequately absorbing the iron that you are eating, your blood iron levels may be low and can lead to a condition called anemia.

Source: <https://www.aafp.org/afp/2000/1001/p1565.html>

One study found that even mild anemia has been associated with a decrease in mobility for older adults living in the community, a decrease in quality of life and also an increased risk of depression and falls. Having a better understanding of what nutrients can improve your blood health can give you a step up to keep your blood running smooth!

Spread the word about Fresh Conversations!

We offer in-person, computer and conference call meeting options!



Page 2

The importance of flexibility and stretching!



Page 3

Kale yeah! Give it a try!

Contact us!

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What is Anemia?

Anemia is a condition in which you lack enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to your body's tissues.

Signs & Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Pale or yellowish skin
- Irregular heartbeats
- Shortness of breath
- Cold hands and feet
- Headaches

*Symptoms can be mild at first but symptoms can increase as anemia worsens.

2 common types:

1. Iron deficiency anemia - the most common anemia is caused by a shortage of iron in your body. Without adequate iron, your body cannot produce enough hemoglobin for red blood cells. This can be caused by blood loss, an ulcer, cancer, to name a few.
2. Vitamin deficiency anemia - In addition to iron, your body also needs folate and vitamin B-12 to produce enough healthy red blood cells. Also, some people who consume enough B-12 are not able to absorb the vitamin, leading to anemia.

Anemia can be temporary or long term, and it can range from mild to severe. Be sure to talk with your provider if you suspect you may have anemia. It can be a warning sign of serious illness.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20351360>



How to pump some iron

Dietary Iron: Heme and Non-Heme

Heme

The only foods that contain heme iron are meat, poultry, and seafood.

Non-Heme

Non-Heme iron is found in plant foods and iron-fortified foods. Examples: beans, apricots, spinach, lentils, peanuts, tofu, chia seeds, broccoli, fortified cereals, whole grain bread/pastas.



Your body absorbs iron from plant sources better when paired with meat, poultry, or seafood. Also when paired with foods that contain vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, sweet peppers, tomatoes, and broccoli.

What if I am a vegetarian?

Vegetarians who do not eat seafood need to eat almost 2x the recommended daily allowance as your body does not absorb iron from plant sources as well as heme iron in animal foods.

The Recommended Daily Allowance for Iron is 8 mg per day for men and women aged 51+.

Do I need a supplement?

Iron is available in many multivitamins. Multivitamins that are geared towards older adults typically contain little to no iron. It's important to note that calcium can possibly interfere with iron so it is often recommended to take calcium and iron separately. If you believe you may not be consuming enough iron, always talk with your doctor first before starting supplements.

Source: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iron-HealthProfessional/#h3>

Flexibility and Stretching

Flexibility is an often overlooked component of physical fitness. Cardiovascular physical activity and strength training get a lot of attention, but flexibility is really important too. Flexibility helps reduce the risk of injury, improves mobility and releases muscle tension and soreness. It can also improve your balance to reduce your risk of falling. A more flexible body means your joints have a greater range of motion. This means we can reach to grab things off a shelf, or turn to look behind us when backing out the driveway more easily - and comfortably! Flexibility exercises can be traditional stretching, but a flexibility routine can also include yoga or tai chi.



A closer look at vitamin K

Vitamin K is another important nutrient especially if you are on any medications such as blood thinners.

Does vitamin K from foods affect medications?

Yes. Some medications, such as blood thinners, can interact with Vitamin K. Most older adults that do take blood thinners are often told to stay away from certain foods that contain Vitamin K such as green leafy vegetables. Experts agree that the real danger comes from a sudden change in your consumption of vitamin K containing foods. For example, if you do not typically eat green leafy vegetables and then suddenly start eating 1 cup at every meal. This can also refer to the opposite, when you typically eat those foods daily and suddenly stop eating them all together. The recommendation is to consume the same amount daily.

Source: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminK-Consumer/>

Be Active. Eat Healthy!

This month, I will take action by...

How much vitamin K does a healthy adult need every day?

Adult men over age 19 need 120 mcg per day.

Adult women over age 19 need 90 mcg per day. If your doctor has cautioned you to watch your vitamin K intake, consult with them to determine a recommended amount.

Where do I find vitamin K?

- Green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, broccoli, and lettuce
- Vegetable Oils
- Some fruits such as blueberries and figs
- Meat, cheese, eggs, and soybeans

*It's also important to note that many fortified foods are not fortified with Vitamin K.

Does cooking affect the nutrient levels?

Cooking certain fruits or vegetables does change nutrient levels. This does depend on the amount of time cooked, cooking method, and vegetable. Eating a balanced diet of raw and cooked fruits and vegetables will increase your overall nutrient intakes.

1 cup of spinach or kale can give you over 100% of your daily value of vitamin K!

Food Spotlight: Kale

- Kale is a member of the Brassica family, which includes mustards, turnips, and cabbage.
- It is a cool-season crop that thrives in the spring and fall and is capable of tolerating frosts.
- Kale can be enjoyed by removing the leaves from the stems and cooking them down like spinach or collard greens. They can also be eaten as kale chips, in smoothies, or salads.
- Because vitamin K is fat soluble, it is best to eat with fat to improve absorption. So, drizzle some olive oil or add diced avocado on your favorite leafy green salad.
- Food safety tip: Make sure to wash kale. Soak in a large bowl of ice water. Use a slotted spoon to remove the kale to a colander. Rinse under cold running water, lay the kale on clean towels and pat the tops with a towel.

Source: <https://fsi.colostate.edu/kale-and-collard-greens/>

Source: <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-many-types-and-health-benefits-of-kale>



Need help finding a food pantry, free hot meals or community garden?

Call 2-1-1 for resources available in your area.



Savory Greens



**Serves 6, 1 cup per serving,
\$0.90 per serving**

Ingredients:

- 3 cup water
- ¼ pound skinless turkey breast
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 2 gloves garlic, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 pounds greens (mixture of collards, kale, turnips greens, mustard greens)

Instructions:

1. Place all ingredients except greens into a large pot and bring to a boil.
2. Prepare greens by thoroughly washing and removing stems.
3. Slice greens into bite size pieces.
4. Add greens to stock. Cook 20 to 30 minutes or until tender. Serve hot.

Fresh produce not fit in your budget this month? There are many frozen options for greens such as frozen spinach or kale.

Nutrition information (per serving): 69 calories, 10 grams fiber, 7 grams protein, 1 gram fat, 10 g carbohydrates, 267 mg sodium

Source: <https://mihotm.recipes/sides/savory-greens/>



Word Search

Anemia
Supplement
Spinach
Stretch
Iron

Vitamin K
Deficiency
Multivitamin
Fatigue
Yoga

Kale
Heme
Flexible
Greens
Blood

O K I W C M A P V P D P Z B T Y F N
 E A I M J Z W G O L G X R W K O I B
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