



## **Thank you for donating Platelets or Blood**

We care about your health and want you to know that donating blood/platelets reduces iron stores in your body. In many people, this has no effect on their health. However, in some people, particularly younger women and frequent donors of either gender, blood donation may remove most of the body's iron stores. We want you to understand these issues more clearly

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### **What happens to me during a blood donation?**

Red Blood Cells are red because of the way iron is carried in Hemoglobin, a protein that brings oxygen to the body. Therefore, the removal of red blood cells during blood donation also removes iron from your body. The impact of this iron loss on your health varies among donors.

### **How does the blood donation affect iron stored in my body?**

Iron is needed to make new red blood cells to replace those you lose from donation. To make new red blood cells, your body either uses iron already stored in your body or uses iron that is in the food you eat. Many women have only a small amount of iron stored in their body, which is not enough to replace the red blood cells lost from even a single donation. Men have more iron stored in their body. However, men who donate blood often (more than two times per year) may also have low iron stores.

### **Does the blood center test for low iron stores in my body?**

No, the blood center tests your hemoglobin but not your iron stores. Hemoglobin is a very poor predictor of iron stores. You may have a normal amount of hemoglobin and be allowed to donate blood even though your body's iron stores are low.

*Thank you!*

### **How may low iron stores affect me?**

There are several possible symptoms associated with low iron stores. These include fatigue, decreased exercise capacity, and pica (a craving to chew things such as ice or chalk). In addition, having low iron stores may increase the possibility of having a low hemoglobin test, preventing blood donation.

### **What can I do to maintain my iron stores?**

While eating a well-balanced diet is important for all donors, simply eating iron-rich foods may not replace all the iron lost from blood donation. Taking multivitamins with iron or iron supplements either prescribed or over the counter (from a drugstore) may help replace iron lost. Iron supplements vary in name and proportion of iron within the tablet/caplet. The most effective dose, type of iron supplement, and length of treatment are currently being studied. Current recommendations range from one typical multivitamin with iron (19 mg iron) to elemental iron caplets (45 mg iron) for six weeks to three months. Your physician or pharmacist may be able to assist you in deciding what dose, type, and duration of iron supplement to choose.

### **Why doesn't a single big dose of iron replace what I lose during the donation?**

Because people have a limit in iron absorption (ie, 2-4 mg/day), taking iron in larger doses for a shorter period may not lead to better absorption (and may result in more side effects). The overall goal is to replace, over 1 to 3 months, 200-250 mg of iron lost during donation.



## Iron Rich Foods

Iron Guidelines: The recommended daily iron intake for the average woman is 18 mg, while the average man needs 10 mg. Food has two forms of iron: heme and nonheme. You absorb up to 30 percent of heme iron, which is found only in animal tissue (meat, poultry and fish). You absorb 2-10 percent of non-heme iron, found in plant foods as well as meat.

### Meat (heme iron)

Liver  
Liverwurst  
Organ Meats  
Quail  
Duck  
Other Poultry  
Red Meats  
Lamb  
Pork

### Seafood

Caviar  
Clams  
Cuttlefish  
octopus  
Oysters  
Mackerel  
Sardines  
Shrimp  
Scallops  
Tuna

### Beans and Peas

Natto  
Soybeans  
Lentils  
Lima Beans  
White Beans  
Kidney Beans  
Chickpeas  
Pinto Beans

### Nuts and Seeds

Sesame Seeds  
Pumpkin Seeds  
Squash Seeds  
Cashew Nuts  
Flaxseed  
Pine Nuts  
Almonds  
Sunflower Seeds

### Fruit

Dried Apricots  
Dried Peaches  
Watermelon  
Prunes  
Raisins  
Dates  
Figs  
Olives  
Dried Currants  
Blueberries  
Prune Juice

### Vegetables

Morel Mushrooms  
Sun-Dried Tomatoes  
Spinach  
Collard Greens  
Kale  
Chard  
Olives

### Vegetables (cont)

Hearts of Palm  
Sweet Potatoes  
Hummus  
Endive  
Broccoli  
Potato Skins

### Grains

Amaranth  
Whole Wheat Germ  
Sorghum  
Teff  
Oats  
Barley  
Rye  
Fortified Cereals  
Cream Wheat  
Enriched Breads  
Enriched Pastas  
Corn Meal

### Other

Tofu  
Molasses  
Maple Syrup  
Corn Syrup  
Curry Powder  
Brewer's Yeast  
Egg & Egg Whites

### Unlock the Iron: Grains, Beans, Nuts and Seeds

Certain foods that are high in iron also contain a potent inhibitor called Phytic Acid that keeps your body from absorbing the iron. In fact, this potent inhibitor can actually affect your absorption from iron in other foods you may be eating. However, Phytic Acid is easily reduced with a simple kitchen technique

- Try soaking your grains, beans and seeds overnight or at least for a few hours. Soaking reduces the Phytic Acid and essentially "Unlocks" the iron in these foods. After soaking, rinse and enjoy. This will also cut down on cooking time.

## RAISED YOUR IRON?

Call us at (404)459-8744 to schedule your next appointment

Give **Blood**, Give **Life**