

# Inner Healing Academy

## Courses & Coaching

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## How to ensure sufficient iron on a plant-based diet

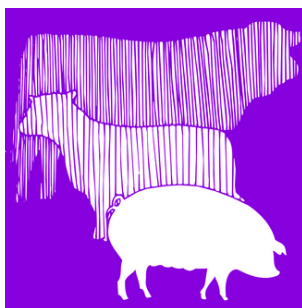


### Iron's role in the body

Iron is an essential nutrient for all the cells in your body. Iron's main job is to help transport oxygen through hemoglobin in the blood and myoglobin in muscles. It supplies oxygen and energy throughout your entire body. Iron also plays an important role in DNA synthesis and immunity.

### Types of Iron

There are 2 types of iron: heme (which is found in animal foods) and non-heme (which is found in plants). You only need to consume one type to meet all of your body's iron requirements.



**Heme**



**Non-heme**

Heme is better absorbed than non-heme iron but this is not a cause for concern. The absorption of non-heme iron can be vastly improved by eating certain foods together. More on this later.

### Iron-rich foods

It may sound simple enough but the way to ensure that you are getting enough iron on a plant-based diet is to make sure you are eating iron-rich foods. Some of the best plant food sources of iron include:

- Fruits: dates, prunes, figs
- Vegetables: white mushrooms, swiss chard, collard greens
- Legumes: lentils, soybeans, kidney beans
- Grains: brown rice, oatmeal, quinoa
- Nuts: pistachio, pine, cashew
- Seeds: pumpkin, sunflower, hemp



## Iron absorption

But it's not how much iron you consume necessarily but how well you absorb it. Indeed, consuming iron is not the same as absorbing iron. I've heard people on all types of diets say that they eat a lot of iron-rich foods but their iron levels are low. So, you need to make sure you are absorbing the iron not just consuming it.

Fortunately, there are some very simple ways in which you can increase your absorption of non-heme iron. Here are some suggestions:



### Increasing absorption



- Combine plant-based foods with foods containing vitamin C. Vitamin C significantly enhances iron absorption, in fact it can increase by as much as six times. Consume beans, grains and seeds with foods high in vitamin C, such as bell peppers, berries, broccoli, kale and citrus fruits.
- Eat broccoli, leafy greens and tomato sauce because these foods contain both iron and vitamin C which is the perfect mix for heme-iron absorption.
- The fermentation process used to make breads such as whole-wheat sourdough can also help to increase iron absorption.

### Decreasing absorption

- Do not drink coffee or tea whilst eating because they contain tannins that inhibit iron absorption. This is true also of decaffeinated coffee and tea. I would suggest avoiding these drinks at least an hour before and two hours after eating.



As you can see, sufficient iron is totally available to you on a plant-based diet. Simply follow the principles outlined here and you will find it is not difficult to get enough iron and also find that it is readily absorbed. For more detailed information, check out our Go Vegan Successfully course: [CLICK HERE](#)

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