

### *Temporarily Deferred for Low Iron?*

Volunteer blood donors can often be deferred for low iron (hematocrit) levels. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) requires that blood donors have a minimum hematocrit level of 38%. This requirement is for the safety of the donor to ensure that after donation, the donor's iron level will still be within the normal range for a healthy adult. It also ensures that the patient gets a full "dose" of the red cells needed to provide oxygen to the body.

*Some people believe that if they are deferred for low iron they can no longer give blood, but this is not necessarily correct.* Hematocrit levels can fluctuate daily, and are affected by a number of factors including exercise and diet. Women also lose iron each month through menstruation, which can make levels lower.

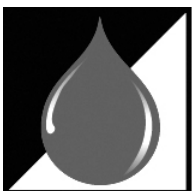
If you have been diagnosed as anemic, or if you were deferred today for low iron, take heart. This is easily corrected for most people, and your physician can suggest the best course of action to have you back in the donor chair in no time!

Our local demand for blood is increasing, and we need to keep our donor base increasing as well. **If you are able to give a pint of blood, please try to do so. Even if you can not donate today, you can help by spreading the word to your friends and family and encouraging them to become blood donors.** Remember, each donation can save up to three lives. One day your donation of blood could be needed to save the life of a friend or family member.

### *Tips to Keep Your Iron Level High*

If you are concerned about your iron level, planning ahead can increase your chances of being able to donate.

- Get plenty of rest, avoid excessive exercise for a few days, and add more iron to your diet.
- Eating or drinking foods rich in vitamin C can help your body absorb the iron you eat.
- Tea, coffee, and milk contain substances that may interfere with iron absorption when consumed with a meal.
- High fiber foods or bran supplements may also reduce absorption.
- Some medications, such as antacids or phosphate salts like calcium phosphate, may also interfere with iron absorption, so ask your doctor about any medicines you are taking.
- The form of iron found in animal foods (heme iron) is better absorbed than the form from plant foods (non-heme iron). Heme iron is found in foods like beef and chicken liver, oysters, clams, and turkey. Beans, wheat germ, whole grains, and lentils are some non-heme iron foods. For a list of foods containing iron, see the back of this page.
- Some people require supplements to bring their iron levels up, but this is not the answer for everyone. Iron pills may have side effects and may even be dangerous for some people. Multivitamins have small percentages of iron that may be helpful, and easier to digest.



**FLORIDA GEORGIA  
BLOOD ALLIANCE**

*It's About Life*

|                         | <b>FOOD</b>  | <b>AMOUNT</b> | <b>IRON MG.</b> |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>GRAINS</b>           | Bread (white or whole wheat)                       | 1 slice       | 0.5             |
|                         | Bran muffin  | 1             | 1.5             |
|                         | English muffin                                     | 1             | 1.5-1.9         |
|                         | Tortillas  | 1             | 1               |
|                         | Cooked cereal                                      | 1/2 cup       | 0.7             |
|                         | Wheat germ   | 1/2 cup       | 4               |
| <b>MEAT</b>             | Organ meats  | 3 oz.         | 7               |
|                         | Liver  | 3 oz.         | 8-9             |
|                         | Liver sausage                                      | 3 oz.         | 4-6             |
|                         | Shellfish  | 3 oz.         | 4-5             |
|                         | Red meats  | 3 oz.         | 4               |
|                         | Fish and poultry                                   | 3 oz.         | 2-3             |
| <b>MEAT SUBSTITUTES</b> | Tofu   | 4 oz.         | 2.3             |
|                         | Sunflower seeds                                    | 1 oz.         | 2               |
|                         | Pumpkin seeds                                      | 1 oz.         | 3.2             |
|                         | Cooked dry peas, beans, lentils, lima beans        | 1/2 cup       | 2-3             |
|                         | Egg  | 1             | 1               |
|                         | Nuts   | 1/3 cup       | 0.5-2.0         |
|                         | Peanut butter                                      | 1 tbsp.       | 0.3             |
|                         | <b>FRUIT</b>                                       | Watermelon    | 6" x 1/2" slice |
| Strawberries            |  | 1 cup         | 1.5             |
| Banana                  |  | 1 cup         | 1               |
| <b>DRIED FRUIT</b>      | Raisins, dates, prunes, figs, apricots             | 1/2 cup       | 3-4             |
| <b>CANNED JUICES</b>    | Prune juice  | 3/4 cup       | 7.4             |
|                         | Tomato juice                                       | 3/4 cup       | 1.6             |
|                         | Apple juice  | 3/4 cup       | 1.1             |
| <b>VEGETABLES</b>       | Cooked dark leafy greens (spinach, collards, kale) | 1/2 cup       | 3               |
|                         | Raw dark leafy greens (spinach, collards, kale)    | 1 cup         | 2               |
| <b>OTHER</b>            | Molasses   | 1 tbsp.       | 3.2             |
|                         | Brewer's yeast (dry)                               | 1 tbsp.       | 1.4             |
| <b>FAST FOODS</b>       | Pizza (cheese or pepperoni)                        | 1/2 of 10"    | 4.5-5.4         |
|                         | Hamburger  | 1 reg.        | 2.5             |
|                         | Cheeseburger                                       | 1 reg.        | 2.5             |
|                         | Beef burrito                                       | 1             | 4.6             |
|                         | Bean burrito                                       | 1             | 2.8             |
|                         | Beef taco  | 1             | 2.9             |