

# Low Hematocrit/Hemoglobin

Hematocrit is the percent of a person's blood composed of oxygen-carrying red blood cells. Hematocrit must be at an acceptable percentage for a person to be able to give blood for another person. A donor's hematocrit level is checked prior to every donation and if it is too low, the donor is temporarily deferred from donating blood.

To support the iron and hematocrit levels in your body, increase your intake of high iron foods.

Eating foods rich in vitamin C such as citrus fruits, broccoli and tomatoes helps your body absorb the iron that you eat. You can improve your iron and hemoglobin levels by including more high-iron foods in your diet and avoiding substances that reduce iron absorption.

## Food Rich in Iron - Iron Boosters

- Red Meat
- Poultry
- Iron-fortified cereals
- Raisins
- Spinach
- Oysters
- Rice
- Fish
- Liver
- Beans
- Prunes
- Shrimp
- Potatoes
- Peas

## Foods to Help You Absorb Iron – Iron Absorbers

- Broccoli
- Cantaloupe
- Grapefruit/Grapefruit Juice
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Turnip Greens
- Brussel Sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Oranges/Orange Juice
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomato Products
- Vegetable Juice

## Foods That Hinder Your Absorption of Iron – Iron Busters

- Coffee
- Caffeinated Beverages
- An Excess of High Fiber Foods
- Tea
- Chocolate
- High Calcium Foods