

According to Dr. John McDougall in his book *The McDougall Program*:

The most commonly seen type is iron-deficiency anemia in women, which is believed to be due to loss of blood during menstrual periods and/or to a deficiency of iron in the diet.ⁱ

“Women who eat the high-fat American foods have abnormally increased levels of estrogens in their bodies that cause a thicker buildup of endometrial tissues, the inside lining of the uterus. When this lining is shed at the end of each monthly cycle, bleeding from this overgrown endometrium is heavier and longer, and therefore more iron is lost than would be shed in periods of lighter menstruation.”ⁱⁱ

“Secondary factors also influence the absorption of iron from ingested foods. Absorption depends upon the acidity of the stomach, the amount of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) in the foods, the kinds of amino acids present, the amount of fiber in the diet, and the form in which the iron is presented (whether heme or nonheme). Ascorbic acid is one of the main enhancers of iron absorption, and fruits and vegetables provide plentiful amounts of this vitamin, whereas all red meats, poultry, and fish are deficient in ascorbic acid and dairy products are not only deficient in ascorbic acid, they are also very low in iron content, and actually inhibit the absorption of iron present in other foods (calcium and phosphates in milk form insoluble complexes with iron). Coffee and the tannic acid in tea will also decrease absorption of iron from foods.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Milligrams of Iron in 100 calories of food^{iv}

-asparagus-3

-white beans-2.6

-broccoli-3.4

-kale-5.8

-milk-0.1

ⁱ John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 306.

ⁱⁱ John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 308.

ⁱⁱⁱ John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 307.

^{iv} John McDougall, MD, *The McDougall Program* (New York: Plume, 1991), 47.