Both dulse and kelp are available in powdered forms that can be capped if you do not like the taste, or sprinkled on food as a salt substitute. Dulse is the milder tasting of the two; both are high in minerals, including calcium and iodine.

Nettles tea, a mild tasting herbal tea, is high in iron. Steep 1 tablespoon dried nettles in 1 cup hot water for about 4 minutes.

To get the most of the iron in your diet:

- Eat high iron meals (or iron supplements) with vitamin C or foods high in vitamin C, such as orange juice. (Taking 200 mg to 500 mg of vitamin C nearly doubles iron absorption.)
- Niacin, B1, B2, pantothenic acid, choline, B12, folic acid, calcium, cobalt, and copper are involved in the absorption, assimilation and utilization of iron. Get adequate amounts of these nutrients.
- Minimize exposure to cigarette smoke and other air pollutants; they rob the body of vitamin C or otherwise deplete the body of iron.
- Tannic acid, caffeine, and phosphates in caffeinated teas, coffee, and sodas inhibit iron absorption. Space consumption of these beverages away from high iron meals, or give them up entirely.
- Avoid antacids. Iron is better absorbed in an acid stomach; antacids neutralize stomach acids.
- Minimize use of laxatives. Laxatives decrease the length of time food remains in the upper intestine; this decreases the amount of time the body has to absorb iron.
- Minimize consumption of refined carbohydrates (sugars and white flour). High in calories and low in nutrients, they cause the secretion of more alkaline digestive juices, which decrease the acidity of the stomach, decreasing the absorption of iron.
- Do not take iron supplements or high iron meals with dairy products. Dairy neutralizes the stomach acidity, decreasing the absorption of iron.
- Use leavened whole grains; yeast in the fermentation process makes iron available (whole unleavened grains contain phytates that bind to iron and prevent its absorption).
- Don't count on iron fortified foods; iron used by manufacturers is often a phosphate compound not soluble in the human digestive tract.
- Large doses of supplemental zinc or calcium interfere with iron absorption.
- Cast-iron cookware adds iron to food, especially if the food is acidic (tomato sauce, for example).
- Regular aerobic exercise improves iron absorption, due to the body's greater need for oxygen carrying capacity.
- Choose iron supplements carefully.

Taking Care with Supplements

1. Excesses of certain nutrients can cause deficiencies in others. Before taking megadoses of any supplement, seek the opinion of a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable about nutrition.

2. Avoid ferrous sulphate! It is poorly absorbed, and is associated with miscarriages, nausea, constipation, and the destruction of vitamin E (which is active in preventing red blood cell death and subsequent anemia).

3. Avoid sustain release iron—it causes most of the iron to be released after it can be absorbed.

4. Chelated iron is more easily absorbed than non-chelated iron. (Chelated iron is iron chemically bound to another substance more easily absorbed than iron; it acts as a carrier of iron through the intestinal wall.) Clients report good results with *Floradix Iron and Herb Formula™*.

5. Iron is more easily absorbed when complexed with a mild organic acid—such as ferrous gluconate, ferrous fumerate or ferrous lactate. Ferrous phosphates, ferrous carbonates, and ferric forms of iron are poorly absorbed.

6. Iron supplements are best taken with food. This slows movement through the digestive tract; increasing the amount of time it has to be absorbed (as well as stimulating acidic digestive juices). Pregnant women find iron supplements more tolerable if taken with the evening meal, when the blood sugar is less likely to be low, so they are less likely to be nauseated.

7. Excessive amounts of iron supplements can be toxic. Keep iron supplements in jars with childproof caps, out of children's reach. Symptoms of iron overload are: headaches, shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, and graying skin. Greater than 100 mg of iron daily over an extended period of time can be toxic.

Table 2. Concentration of Iron Per Serving of Food

Food	Serving Size	Iron (mg)
clams, canned drained	1 cup	44.7
dulse seaweed, dried	1 ounce	42.8
pumpkin seeds, dried	1 cup	33.9
kelp seaweed, dried	1 ounce	28.4
clams, minced	small can	27.5
lamb's liver	3.5 ounces	17.9
quinoa grain, dry	1 cup	15.7
rice bran	1 cup	15.4
pork liver	3 ounces	15.2
amaranth grain, dry	1 cup	14.8
oysters, simmered eastern	3.5 ounces	13.4
tofu, firm raw	1/2 cup	13.2
kidneys, braised	3.5 ounces	13.1
sesame seeds	1 cup	10.5
wheat germ	1 cup	10.3
molasses, black strap	2 T	10.1
sunflower seeds	1 cup	9.7
Irish moss seaweed, dried	3.5 ounces	8.9
soy beans, cooked	1 cup	8.8
chilli and beans	1 cup	8.7
pistachio nuts	1 cup	8.6
pork and beans, canned	1 cup	8.3
rye flour	1 cup	8.2
cashews, dry roasted	1 cup	8.2
spirulina, dried	1 ounce	8.0
soy flour, full fat	1 cup	8.0
lima beans, dried	3.5 ounces	7.8
chicken livers, fried	3 medium	7.4
lentils, dried	3.5 ounces	6.8
white beans, cooked	1 cup	6.6
spinach, cooked	1 cup	6.4
parsley, raw	3.5 ounces	6.2
peach, dried	3.5 ounces	6.0
black walnut, raw	3.5 ounces	6.0
mussels, steamed	3 ounces	5.7
apricots, dried	3.5 ounces	5.5
beef liver	3 ounces	5.3
thyme, dried	1 T	5.3
pine nuts, dried	3.5 ounces	5.2
almonds, dried whole	1 cup	5.2
kidney beans, cooked	1 cup	5.2
Jerusalem artichokes	1 cup	5.1
liverwurst	3.5 ounces	5.0
garbanzo beans, cooked	1 cup	4.7
zayante currants, dried	1 cup	4.6
whole wheat flour	1 cup	4.6
calf liver	3 ounces	4.4
refried beans, canned	1 cup	4.4
pinto beans, cooked	1 cup	4.4
prunes, dried	3.5 ounces	4.4
corned beef	3.5 ounces	4.4
blackeyed peas, cooked	1 cup	4.2
figs, dried	5	4.0
Swiss chard, cooked	1 cup	3.9
humus	1 cup	3.8
miso, natto	1/4 cup	3.8
turkey	3.5 ounces	3.8
raisins	3/5 cup	3.5
purslane leaves, raw	3.5 ounces	3.5
hamburger, lean	3.5 ounces	3.5
beechnuts, filberts, Brasilnuts	3.5 ounces	3.4
coconut, dried	3.5 ounces	3.3
veal	3.5 ounces	3.3
leg of lamb	3.5 ounces	3.3
potato, baked	1 whole	2.7

(Iron Content Analysis Courtesy of Elizabeth Hands, Esha Research, PO Box 13028, Salem, OR 97309.)