



Thrive: General Female recommendations for improved blood health.

Calcium: For adult women aged 19-50, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommended daily allowance is 1,000 mg/day. For women over 50, the recommended daily allowance is 1,200 mg/day. Good sources of calcium include dairy products, leafy green vegetables, certain fish, grains, tofu, cabbage, and summer squash. Your body cannot take in more than 500 mg at any one time and there's no benefit to exceeding the recommended daily amount.

Magnesium: Magnesium increases calcium absorption from the blood into the bone. In fact, your body can't utilize calcium without it. The USDA recommended daily allowance for magnesium is 320 to 400 mg/day. Good sources include leafy green vegetables, summer squash, broccoli, halibut, cucumber, green beans, celery, and a variety of seeds.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D is also crucial to the proper metabolism of calcium. Aim for 600 IU (international units) daily. You can get Vitamin D from about half an hour of direct sunlight, and from foods such as salmon, shrimp, vitamin-D fortified milk, cod, and eggs

Iron: for adolescent women aged 14-18, the U.S. Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) recommended daily amount is 15 mg (27 mg if pregnant, 10 mg if lactating). For adult women aged 19-50, the FNB recommends 18 mg/day (27 mg if pregnant, 9 mg if lactating). For women 51+ years old, the recommended daily amount is 8 mg.

Part of the reason why so many women fail to get the amount of iron they need is because one of the best sources of iron is red meat (especially liver) which also contains high levels of saturated fat. While leafy green vegetables and beans are also good sources of iron—and don't contain high levels saturated fat—the iron from plant foods is different to the iron from animal sources, and not absorbed as well by the body. Other foods rich in iron include poultry, seafood, dried fruit such as raisins and apricots, and iron-fortified cereals, breads, and pastas.

Vitamin B9: *Folate or vitamin B9 (also known as folic acid when used in fortified foods or taken as a supplement) is another nutrient that many women don't get enough of in their diets. Folate can greatly reduce the chance of neurological birth defects when taken before conception and during the first few weeks of pregnancy. Folate can also lower a woman's risk for heart disease and certain types of cancer, so even if you're not planning on getting pregnant (and many pregnancies are unplanned), it's an essential nutrient for every woman of childbearing age. In later life, folate can help your body manufacture estrogen during menopause.*