

Choosing an Iron Pill

Always start with taking 1 pill a day. If you tolerate it well, increase the amount after 3 to 4 days to the recommended amount. The most common side effects are constipation or diarrhea, stomach discomfort and dark or black stool. This is more common with the last 3 pills (iron salts) listed below. Do not take iron at same time as antibiotics, Parkinson or thyroid medications.

Iron pills	Amount	Approximate cost per day	Information
Heme-Iron Polypeptide examples — Optifer[®] , Proferrin[®]	One tablet (11 mg) 1 to 3 times a day or per doctor's advice	59¢ to \$1.77 a day \$58.89 for 100 tablets (Optifer [®])	Very easy to absorb. Take with or without food. Excellent choice if you are prone to constipation or upset stomach or take medicines that reduce stomach acid.* These pills are made from animal proteins (bovine source). Do not take if you have an allergy to cow products.
Polysaccharide-Iron Complex examples — EZfer[®] , FeraMAX[®] , Polyride Fe , Triferexx[®]	One capsule (150 mg) once daily or per doctor's advice	45¢ a day \$45.49 for 100 capsules (Triferexx [®])	Take with vitamin C (ascorbic acid) 250 - 500 mg or with a glass of orange juice. Take with or without food. Good choice if you are prone to constipation or upset stomach. Available in vegan certified capsules. Almost tasteless.
Ferrous fumarate 300 mg tablets examples — Eurofer , Palafer[®]	One tablet once daily or per doctor's advice	25¢ a day \$7.49 for 30 tablets (Palafer)	These pills may also be called 'iron salts'. Take with vitamin C (ascorbic acid) 250 - 500 mg or with a glass of orange juice. Take on an empty stomach — at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after meals or drinking coffee, tea or red wine. Do not take antacids or calcium supplements within 2 hours of taking iron salts. Iron absorption may be decreased if pills are taken with medicines that reduce stomach acid.*
Ferrous sulphate 300 mg tablets examples — Feosol , Fer- In-Sol	One to two tablets once daily or per doctor's advice	3¢ to 7¢ a day \$3.47 for 100 tablets	
Ferrous gluconate 300 mg tablets	One to three tablets once daily or per doctor's advice	5¢ to 15¢ a day \$5.20 for 100 tablets	Iron salts are more likely to cause stomach upset or constipation when compared to other iron formulations. If unable to tolerate stomach upset, try taking iron every other day and not with vitamin C or orange juice.

Prices are approximate and subject to change.

*Examples of brand name medicines that reduce stomach acid are:
Prevacid, Nexium, Tecta, Pantoloc, Losec, Prilosec, Zantac