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If Popeye™ added **BACON** to his spinach, he might be even stronger.



Popeye knew he needed iron for energy – to be strong and to take oxygen to all parts of his body. And he knew that spinach is a source of iron, but not all iron is created equally. Meat sources such as beef, pork, chicken, lamb and fish have heme-iron, the most easily used by the body. Plant sources, such as spinach, beans, lentils, and some fruits and vegetables contain non-heme iron, which is not as well absorbed. And that is why vegetarians need almost twice as daily recommended amount of iron compared to non-vegetarians.



The good news is that eating meat with plant sources of iron actually helps the body absorb higher amounts of non-heme iron. Popeye knew what medical experts today can't stress enough: that iron deficiency anemia is the #1 nutrition deficiency in North America affecting seven percent of women, one in four African-American woman and ten percent of people over 65. In Canada, 12-18% of women ages 14-50 years have inadequate intakes of iron.



Globally, where meat is less accessible and affordable, the anemia problem is even bigger. The World Health Organization says 1.62 billion people worldwide are affected.



Follow Popeye's lead: enjoy spinach as part of your healthy balanced diet. Pair it with a steak or chicken breast and you'll get even more bang for your iron buck.

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Naturally Nutritious Meat: The Sensible Choice.

Sources: 1. Dietitians of Canada <http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Minerals/Food-Sources-of-Iron.aspx>. Accessed August 2015