

The

Iron Mistakes Checklist

Why your iron pills aren't working — and how to finally fix it


You've been doing everything "right": taking your supplements, eating spinach, maybe even pairing it with OJ. Yet your ferritin still refuses to move.

Here's the truth — it's not always what you're taking, but how you're taking it.

Mistake #1: Daily Dosing

Iron isn't a vitamin you can top up every day.

Daily dosing spikes hepcidin, the hormone that blocks iron absorption for the next 24 hours.

 **Fix:** Take your iron every other day, not daily. Studies (and Reddit warriors) agree — alternate-day dosing often absorbs better.

Mistake #2: Tea, Coffee, or Dairy Near Your Iron

Polyphenols and calcium basically tell your iron to "stay out."

 **Fix:** Take iron on an empty stomach, or at least 2 hours away from your latte, chai, or milk.

Mistake #3: No Vitamin C Support

Iron loves vitamin C — it converts it into the absorbable form.

 **Fix:** Take your iron with 250–500 mg vitamin C or a small glass of orange juice.

Mistake #4: The Wrong Form

Ferrous sulfate often causes nausea and constipation, so people stop taking it — or absorb less.

🩸 Fix: Try iron bisglycinate (gentler) or heme iron (if you're sensitive).

Some also add lactoferrin — a protein that helps your body hold onto iron better.

Mistake #5: Ignoring the Root Cause

If your ferritin never moves, something's blocking absorption.

🩸 Check for:

- Heavy periods
 - Celiac disease
 - H. pylori infection
 - Autoimmune gastritis
 - Chronic antacid/PPI use
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Mistake #6: Sticking to Oral Iron Forever

If your levels don't rise after 6–8 weeks of optimized dosing, it's time for IV iron. It's standard practice — not failure.

Bonus Tip

Your “ferritin number” is your storage, not your daily intake.

Aim to get ferritin above 50 µg/L for energy and hair support (confirm with your doctor).