



Iron-Rich Feast

What it is The Iron-Rich Feast is a community dinner hosted in the days leading up to a blood drive. Since giving blood requires a healthy iron intake, your club can host a feast with plenty of iron-rich foods. This event allows the community to come together for a fun event that reminds them of the blood drive and allows them to increase their iron intake before they donate.

How it helps The majority of people who are deferred from donating are deferred because they have low iron levels. The Iron-Rich Feast will help your donors be more aware of the need to replace iron lost during donation and help prevent deferral from subsequent donations for anemia. Your event will also give you the opportunity to recruit new donors.

Get started Contact your local American Red Cross chapter or Service to the Armed Forces station for guidance. They will help you with planning and will point you to useful resources. The steps to planning the feast will be similar to hosting the blood drive in that you will need to find a location and promote the event.

- 1 Secure a location for the feast that is suitable for a large group of people. You may want to consider places like your school cafeteria, local banquet halls and recreation centers. Ask the location to sponsor the feast and allow you to use the space for free.
- 2 Determine what iron-rich foods you will serve at your event. In the resources section, you will find a list of iron-rich foods. Talk to local business owners and ask if they are willing to sponsor your event by providing food, drinks, plates, cups and utensils.
- 3 To help cover the expenses for the feast, you may want to consider charging a small fee to those who attend. If you are able to have most of the food donated, you may still choose to charge a small fee so that your club can also make a monetary donation to the Red Cross in addition to your blood drive.

Want more information?
Email us!

youthinvolvement@redcross.org

DID YOU KNOW?

The American Red Cross holds more than 200,000 blood drives every year.

What next? Once you have the location secure and details planned, there are a few more promotional and planning things to do:

- Create a Facebook event for the Iron-Rich Feast, and invite your friends and family. Promote the feast through your school newspaper, morning announcements, flyers and social media. Talk to your school to see if they can assist you with advertising your event through their communication tools.
- Create a takeaway “recipe card” that has a list of several iron-rich foods that individuals should eat the day before they donate. On the back of the “recipe card,” provide additional information about your upcoming blood drive.
- Post your blood drive schedule at the feast to help remind donors of their appointment time and have a volunteer onsite sign up new donors. Provide interesting statistics about blood donation to continue to educate your guests about the importance of donating blood.

FACTS

- » Whole blood donation causes the loss of substantial amounts of iron that can take up to eight weeks to replace through eating a healthy diet that is rich in iron.
- » Young women and frequent blood donors may have low iron stores before donation and would especially benefit from a regular healthy diet that is rich in iron, in order to prevent deferral from donation.
- » Iron absorption may be enhanced by consuming fruits and drinks rich in vitamin C along with iron rich foods, while coffee and tea taken together with meals may decrease the absorption of iron.

Before beginning, contact your local Red Cross chapter for assistance. You can find chapter information at **redcross.org**.

SHAKE IT UP!

- » Make the feast into a movie night by showing a film. Advertise your movie night to help get more people to attend.
- » Encourage attendees to sign thank you cards to donors for the next day's blood drive. If young children will be attending, you may want to provide a craft or activity.
- » Have attendees use Twitter to tweet or post about the blood drive.
- » Co-sponsor the event with another club; have each club sign up to bring a specific iron-rich dish.

SHOW AND TELL

- » Share pictures and videos of your Iron-Rich Feast by sending them to **youthinvolvement@redcross.org**.
- » Do you know about Schooltube? Share a video of your feast at **schooltube.com**! Include “Red Cross Iron-Rich Feast” in the title of your video.

RESOURCES

- » Iron-Rich Food List