

Thalassemia Diet

- Tea with meals will reduce absorption of food.
- Meat intake should be reduced. Plant source protein would be better.
- Avoid any vitamin C rich food in the diet like orange or lime juice. If needed can be taken separately after 2-3 hours of food intake.
- Adding vitamin E supplements will be helpful.
- Moderate weight gaining exercises with cycling, swimming, water aerobics will be helpful.
- Diet rich in fruit and vegetables is better for overall nutrition.
- Avoid food like oysters, liver, pork, beans, beef, peanut butter. Also avoid iron-fortified cereals, wheat, and among fruits and vegetables, avoid prune juice, prunes, watermelon, spinach, leafy green vegetables, dates, raisins, broccoli, peas, and fava bean.
- Also, look for iron in snacks, candies, etc. Try to maintain intake of iron from overall diet to less than 18 mg per day.
- It is important to take more of foods which decrease iron absorption and reduce foods which increase iron absorption.
- Cereals like wheat bran, maize, oats, rice, and soy. Soy protein can be added in diet during muscle building exercises. It is important avoid any vitamin C food along with this.
- Tea particularly and coffee also will reduce iron absorption. Taking meals with tea and coffee, particularly with milk will reduce iron absorption. You can add spices like oregano to the diet.
- Take more dairy products like milk, cheese and yogurt which reduce iron absorption, particularly with meals. Make sure, all are non-iron fortified.

- Also avoid pickles, vinegar fermented food, alcohol, soy sauce, turnips and carrots. Alcohol consumption and smoking should be avoided.
- I recommend cereals, particularly rice, oats or maize along with tea (2 cups). You can vary the diet based on taste. Vitamin C food can be taken 3-4 hours after food intake.