

FOOD SOURCES: ZINC

Zinc is an essential trace mineral; it must be obtained through the diet and is required by the body in small amounts. Zinc is found in shellfish, beef and other red meats, as well as nuts, legumes and fortified breakfast cereals. The bioavailability of zinc, or the amount retained and used by the body, may be lower in grains and plant proteins because these foods also contain phytates, which bind to zinc and inhibit its absorption.

Zinc plays an important role in several body systems – over 100 enzymes in the body require zinc to function. Zinc is necessary for normal growth and development, immune and neurological function, proper sense of taste and smell, and maintaining the structure of cell membranes, as well as protecting them from oxidative damage.

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for zinc is as follows:

- **Females, ages 19+:** 8 mg per day
- **Females (pregnant), ages 19+:** 11 mg per day
- **Females (lactating), ages 19+:** 12 mg per day
- **Males, ages 19+:** 11 mg per day

Food, Standard Serving Size	Average Zinc Content (mg)
Eastern oysters (breaded, fried), 3 ounces/6 medium	74
Eastern oysters (raw), 3 ounces/6 medium	33
Game meat, bison/deer (braised), 3 ounces	7.3
Beef chuck roast (braised), 3 ounces	7.0
Alaska king crab (cooked), 3 ounces	6.5
Ground beef (cooked), 3 ounces	5.3
Lamb shoulder (braised), 3 ounces	5.2
Pork shoulder (braised), 3 ounces	4.1
Breakfast cereal (fortified), ¾ cup	3.8
Lobster (cooked), 3 ounces	3.4
Baked beans (canned), ½ cup	2.9
Pork loin (braised), 3 ounces	2.9
Chicken, dark meat (roasted), 3 ounces	2.4
Pumpkin seeds (dried), 1 ounce/~¼ cup	2.2
Cashews (dry roasted), 1 ounce/~17 nuts	1.6

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements. Zinc. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Zinc-HealthProfessional/#h3>. Updated March 13, 2019. March 29, 2019.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Legacy. Version Current: April 2018. Internet: <https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/>. Accessed March 29, 2019.
3. Oregon State University, Linus Pauling Institute, Micronutrient Information Center. Zinc. <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/minerals/zinc>. Updated June 11, 2015. Accessed March 29, 2019.

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