

There's Really Iron in My Cereal!

There's iron in many foods, but did you know that you can see it?

WHAT TO DO

Mash up some breakfast cereal, put it in a small cup, add water, attach the lid (make sure it snaps shut) and shake it for a minute or two. Dump the cereal mush in another cup, rinse with water and look for little grey bits stuck to the bottom of the cup.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Iron is a crucial for a balanced diet but some people don't consume enough to be healthy, so food manufacturers often add iron to many foods. This added iron can take the form of ferrous sulfate (FeSO_4) or elemental iron (Fe). The iron you see in this cereal is elemental iron- it's actually metal! Fortunately acids in your digestive tract change this metallic iron into a form easily absorbed and used by the body. Since iron is magnetic, the small (but very powerful) magnet taped to the bottom of the cup attracts the small iron filings mixed into the cereal, separating them from the rest of the cereal ingredients. Total includes 100% of the recommended daily iron intake, while shredded wheat contains a mere 8% - so you should pull more iron filings out of the Total cereal. Do you?