

Iron for children



What is iron?

Iron is an essential mineral your body needs for brain development, making red blood cells and transporting oxygen around the body in order to function properly.

A baby receives iron from the mother in the womb. Once a baby reaches 6 months, they have used up most of their iron stores and need to start eating foods containing iron.

Symptoms of iron deficiency include fatigue, difficulty sleeping, headaches, loss of appetite, sweating, behaviour issues, infections, failure to grow and eating strange foods such as dirt.

Iron in foods

Best sources of iron:

Iron is present in animal meats and is more easily absorbed by the body.

Red meat has the highest amount of iron.

Red meat:

- beef
- lamb
- kangaroo
- corned beef

White meat:

- chicken
- fish
- pork



Other sources of iron:

Iron is found in some plant products. It is also added through fortification.

However, this iron is less easily absorbed by the body. Examples include:

- eggs
- beans
- chickpeas
- legumes
- tofu
- baked beans
- hommus
- wholemeal/ wholegrain bread
- iron-fortified bread
- iron-fortified cereal
- wholemeal pasta
- sultanas
- wholemeal flour



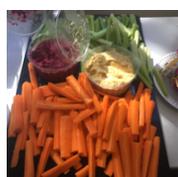


Foods with iron to give your child:



BREAKFAST

Iron-fortified cereal, baked beans, boiled egg, wholemeal toast



SNACKS

Hommus and vegetable sticks, wholemeal toast with spread, savoury muffins made with wholemeal flour, dried fruit



MAIN MEALS

Wholemeal bread sandwich, wholemeal pasta, lentil or tofu curry, quiche



MEAT DISHES

Spaghetti Bolognese, chicken curry, beef stir fry, baked fish, corned beef, lamb stew, beef and vegetable soup, shepherds pie



How to add iron to a child's diet:

- Choose a meat or other source of protein at each meal. Include lean red meat 3-4 times each week.
- Add at least 2 other iron-containing foods each day.
- Foods high in vitamin C such as citrus, strawberries, kiwifruit, dried fruit, tomato, cauliflower, broccoli & capsicum help the body absorb iron.
- Encourage solid foods at meal times for children over the age of 6 months instead of filling up on liquids. Liquids do not provide iron.
- Breastfeed or choose iron-fortified formula. Avoid cow's milk before 12 months of age.