

Iron Recommendations

Iron is important to help infants grow and to keep children healthy. Iron is the part of the blood that helps carry oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body. If there is not enough iron in the diet, babies and children can become anemic. They may feel tired and have a poor appetite.

How much iron does my child need each day?

Infants	Birth-6 months	0.27 mg/day
	7-12 months	11 mg/day
Children	1-3 years	7 mg/day
	4-8 years	10 mg/day
	9-13 years	8 mg/day
Males	14-18 years	11 mg/day
Females	14-18 years	15 mg/day

Try the following for infants:

- If breastfeeding, breastfeed for at least 6 months. For formula fed babies, use an iron-fortified formula.
- Do not offer cow's milk until a child is 1 year old.
- Add iron-fortified cereal to the baby's diet at 4-6 months of age.
- After 6 months of age, offer meats along with foods high in Vitamin C* to enhance iron absorption.

Try the following for children and teens:

- Encourage children and teens to eat foods high in iron every day (see list on next page).
- Offer Vitamin C rich foods* at meals and snack times or if taking an iron supplement to improve iron absorption.
- Once your child is 1 year old, limit milk to 16-24 oz (2-3 cups) per day.
- Cook with cast iron pans when possible.
- If an iron supplement is prescribed, avoid taking it with other supplements such as calcium supplements and antacids, which may interfere with absorption.

*Vitamin C-rich foods: broccoli, grapefruit, kiwi, leafy greens, oranges, bell peppers, strawberries, tomatoes, etc.

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Iron Rich Foods

Food/Beverage Choices	Serving Size	Amount of Iron per Serving (mg)
Fruits and Vegetables		
Spinach	½ cup, boiled/drained	3
Dried apricots	½ cup	2
Raisins	½ cup, seedless	1
Broccoli	1 cup, boiled/drained	1
Starches and Grains		
Cream of wheat	½ cup, prepared	6
All Bran cereal	½ cup	6
Fortified oatmeal	1 cup, cooked	2
Potato with skin	1 small, 1¾ - 2½ diameter	2
Meat and Alternative Proteins		
Beef liver	3 oz, braised	6
Oysters	6 medium, cooked	5
Pumpkin seeds	1 oz, roasted	4
Beef	3 oz tenderloin, broiled	3
Dried beans (including red, white, kidney, pinto, most others)	½ cup, boiled	3
Chickpeas	½ cup, boiled	2
Lentils/black-eyed peas	½ cup, boiled	2
Turkey	3 oz, dark meat, roasted	2
Tofu	1/5 block (~1.7 oz), firm	2
Cashews	1 oz, oil roasted	2
Chicken	3.6 oz leg, roasted	1
Pork	3 oz loin, roasted	1
Sardines	1 sardine, canned	1
Egg	1 large, hard boiled	1
Tuna	2 oz, chunk light, canned	1
Others		
Black strap molasses	1 Tbsp	4
Baking chocolate (unsweetened)	1 oz square	2

*Note that this is a general list and does not account for your child's specific food allergies/intolerances.

This handout was provided to assist you with your child's nutritional needs. All nutrition plans should be individualized by working with a registered dietitian. Please get a referral for "Nutrition Clinic" from your Primary Care Provider. Then call (858) 576-1700 ext. 5999 to book an appointment with a dietitian.