Iron for children



THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF IRON IN FOODS:

- **Haem iron** is the iron found in animal products and is easily absorbed by our bodies, e.g. red meat.
- **Non-haem iron** is found in plantbased food sources, e.g. legumes, vegetables and iron fortified breads and cereals.

Non-haem iron is not absorbed by our bodies as easily as haem-iron. Vitamin C rich foods can help boost iron absorption e.g. citrus fruits, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes.

WHY IS IRON IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN?

It is needed to:

- make red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body
- support brain development
- support a healthy immune system.

Iron deficiency is common in Australia. Children who do not eat enough iron may:

- look tired and pale
- have a poor appetite
- become sick more often
- have a slowed growth rate.

IRON SOURCES

Babies get enough iron from breastmilk or infant formula for the first 6 months of life. After 6 months, foods rich in iron are needed to support healthy growth and development.

DAILY IRON NEEDS

Recommended dietary Intake

Age	RDI
7-12 months	11mg/day
1-3 years	9mg/day
4-5 years	10mg/day



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SOURCES

ANIMAL BASED IRON SOURCES		
Source	Amount	Iron level
Lamb liver	100g	11mg
Beef	100g	3.5mg
Kangaroo	100g	3.2mg
Goat	100g	2.8mg
Lamb	100g	2.5mg
Salmon	100g	1.28mg
Canned tuna	100g	1.07mg
Pork	100g	0.8mg
Chicken	100g	0.4mg

PLANT BASED IRON SOURCES		
Source	Amount	Iron level
Weetbix	2 biscuits	3mg
Cashew butter	30g	1.5mg
Tofu (firm)	50g	1.48mg
Eggs 1	(70g)	1.12mg
Baked beans	½ cup (100g)	1.01mg
Cooked lentils	50g (¼ cup)	1mg
Broccoli	¼ cup (50g)	0.42mg
Spinach (raw)	1 cup	0.86mg

Reference: AUSNUT database

EXAMPLES OF MEALS RICH IN IRON	
From birth to around 6 months	• Breast milk or formula
6 months + Finely mashed or pureed	• Mashed baked beans or lentils • Minced meat (e.g. beef, chicken, lamb, fish e.g. tuna) and mashed vegetables • Iron fortified baby cereal with fruit • Mashed boiled egg or fried omelette (well cooked) • Mashed silken tofu with mashed vegetables
By 8 months Mashed, chopped or finger foods	• Finely chopped lean red meat, chicken or fish with chopped cooked vegetables • Boiled or scrambled egg (well cooked) • Wholemeal toast with hummus or nut butter • Baked beans with wholemeal toast
12+ months Family foods	• Wholemeal toast with nut paste/butter • Scrambled/boiled egg with wholegrain toast • Meat and vegetable casseroles with wholemeal pasta/brown rice • Cooked meat or chicken strips • Spaghetti Bolognese with beef/lamb mince • Lentil patties • Lentil/bean soup

If you are concerned about your child's iron intake, consult your general practitioner (GP)

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

- www.karitane.com.au
- www.healthybeginnings.net.au

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