

# IRON



## INFORMATION TO SUPPORT WITH IRON INTAKE

### Infant Nutrition

It is important that babies have the recommended nutrients in their diet to help with their growth and development. The first year of life is the fastest period of growth for babies as they can triple in their size.

### Iron

Iron is an important mineral for many reasons. Iron helps carry oxygen around the body, helps in brain development and helps to develop a healthy immune system to protect against infections.

Iron deficiency is a common problem in Australian children from 6 months of age. This can occur when they don't get enough iron in their food to keep up with their growth and development needs. Babies get enough iron from breastmilk or infant formula for the first 6 months. After then, in addition to milk, babies need to be introduced to foods high in iron.



### Recommended Dietary Iron Intake

Age	Mg/day
0-6 months	0.2
7-12 months	11
1-3 years	9

### There are two types of iron:

**'Haem iron'** is the iron found in animal sources and is easily taken in (absorbed) by the body, such as red meat which is the best source of iron.

**'Non-haem iron'** is the iron that mainly comes from plant-based sources, such as legumes, vegetables and cereals. It is not taken in (absorbed) by our bodies as easily as haem iron, but it still is a very important source of iron.





## Animal-Based Iron Sources



## Plant-Based Iron Sources

Food	Amount	Iron Level	Source	Amount	Iron Level
Beef	100g	3.2mg	Weetbix	2 biscuits	4.2mg
Lamb	100g	2.5mg	Boiled lentils	1/4 cup	2mg
Salmon	100g	1.28mg	Baked beans	1/2 cup	1.6mg
Canned Tuna	100g	1.07mg	Broccoli	1/2 cup	1mg
Chicken	100g	0.4mg	Eggs	1	1mg

### Birth - 6 months

- Breast milk or formula

### 6 - 7 months

Finely mashed or pureed

- Baked beans
- Pureed or mashed fruit & vegetables
- Minced meat (e.g. beef, chicken, Lamb)
- Iron fortified baby cereal
- Fish (e.g. salmon / tuna)

### 8 - 12 months

Mashed, chopped or finger foods

- Finely chopped lean meat, chicken or fish
- Boiled/ scrambled egg
- Wholemeal toast with peanut paste
- Finely chopped well-cooked meat with chopped vegetables
- Mashed baked beans with wholemeal toast

### 12+ months

Family foods

- Meat and vegetable casseroles with rice
- Cooked meat or chicken strips
- Spaghetti bolognaise with beef/lamb mince
- Lentil patties or soup

## TIPS TO MAKE SURE YOUR BABY GETS ENOUGH IRON:

- Milk feeding whether breast, bottle or cup from birth until around 6 months
- Breast milk or infant formula should be the main drink until 12 months of age
- Start feeding your baby high iron foods, from around 6 months of age in addition to breast or infant formula
- Feed your baby foods high in Vitamin C alongside high iron foods as this helps the body absorb the iron from food, including:  
**Oranges / Strawberries / Tomato / Broccoli / Capsicum**
- Provide a wide variety of nutritious foods from the five food groups every day
- If you are concerned about your child's iron intake consult an Accredited Practicing Dietitian

