

Iron and Children

Iron is a mineral that has several functions in the body.

- Iron carries oxygen to body cells. It also helps cells make energy. With an iron deficiency, a child can become easily tired.
- Iron is an important part of the immune system. A deficiency of iron can leave a child more prone to infections.
- Iron is needed for a child's intellectual development. Iron deficiency has been associated with short attention span, irritability, and difficulty in learning.

Iron Needs

Age	Iron goal (mg)
7 -12 months	11 mg
1-3 years	7 mg
4-8 years	10 mg
9-13 years	8 mg
14-18 year old boys	11 mg
14-18 year old girls	15 mg

*www.cdc.gov (updated 2/11)

To increase iron in your child's diet:

- Limit your child's intake of milk to 3 cups per day (4 cups for teens). Milk decreases the ability to absorb iron in the diet.
- Serve foods naturally high in iron. See chart included with this handout.
- Serve iron fortified cereals.
- Ground meat and poultry are easier for a young child to chew.
- Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron. Foods rich in Vitamin C include oranges, grapefruit, tangerine, kiwi, pineapple, melon, berries, broccoli, tomatoes, potatoes, and green peppers.
- The body more readily absorbs iron from meat, poultry, and fish than iron from plant foods. Eat high iron plant foods along with meat, poultry, fish or foods rich in Vitamin C to help increase absorption of the iron from plant foods.
- Preparing food in iron cookware can add small amounts of iron to food.
- Do not allow your child to drink tea with meals. Tea contains a substance that binds iron.
- **CAUTION:** Do not give your child an iron supplement unless prescribed by your physician. Too much iron is toxic.

IRON CONTENT OF FOOD

FOOD GROUP	SERVING SIZE	MG OF IRON	FOOD GROUP	SERVING SIZE	MG OF IRON
PROTEIN			VEGETABLES		
Beef	3 oz	2	Lima Beans	½ cup	1.5
Lamb	3 oz	2	Spinach	½ cup	3.2
Chicken	3 oz	1	Spinach, raw	½ cup	0.8
Turkey	3 oz	1	Pumpkin, canned	½ cup	1.7
Pork	3 oz	1	Green beans	½ cup	0.8
Ham	3 oz	1	Peas	½ cup	1.3
Veal	3 oz	0.9	Broccoli	½ cup	0.7
Trout	3 oz	2	Potato, baked with skin	½	1.4
Ocean Perch	3 oz	1	Potato, sweet	½ cup	1.7
Mackerel	3 oz	1.3	Squash, acorn	½ cup	0.9
Herring	3 oz	1.2	Squash, butternut	½ cup	0.7
Haddock	3 oz	1.1			
Halibut	3 oz	0.9	NUTS AND SEEDS		
Swordfish	3 oz	0.9	Peanuts	¼ cup	0.6
Salmon	3 oz	0.9	Almonds	¼ cup	1.3
Shrimp	5 large	0.9	Brazil nuts	¼ cup	1.0
Clams	3 oz	24	Cashews	¼ cup	1.7
			Hazelnuts	¼ cup	1.0
Eggs	1	0.7	Peanut Butter	2 Tbsp.	0.6
			Almond Butter	2 Tbsp.	1.2
Soybeans, cooked	½ cup	4.4	Pumpkin Seeds	2 Tbsp.	2.5
Soybeans, roasted	¼ cup	1.7	Sunflower Seeds	2 Tbsp.	1.0
Soy milk	1 cup	1.4			
Tofu	½ cup	0.9	BREADS/CEREALS		
Baked Beans	½ cup	1.0	Bread, whole wheat	1 slice	0.9
Kidney Beans	½ cup	2.6	Bread, white	1 slice	0.7
			Oatmeal, Quaker® instant	1 pkt	8
FRUITS			Cream of Wheat, instant	1 pkt	8
Raisins	2/3 cup	2			
Apricots, dried	5 halves	0.8	Fortified Cereals/Breads		
Prunes, dried	5	1.1	10% Daily Value	Check label	1.8
Prune juice	½ cup	3	20% Daily Value	Check label	3.6
			30% Daily Value	Check label	5.4
MISC			40% Daily Value	Check label	7.2
Blackstrap Molasses	1 Tbsp.	3.5	50% Daily Value	Check label	9.0
Molasses	1 Tbsp.	0.9			
Wheat germ	2 Tbsp.	1.3	Baby cereals	Call nutrition	
Wheat bran	2 Tbsp.	0.8			

If you have any further questions, a Reliant Medical Group Nutrition Education Specialist is available to help: call (508 852-6175, or 1 (888) 392-0183