



Iron deficiency anaemia or low iron

If bub does not get enough iron from their food, they may develop iron deficiency (d-he-fish-hun-see) anaemia (uh-nee-me-uh) or low iron as they cannot replace the iron they had used.

Iron is important for:

- carrying oxygen around bub's body and giving them energy
- helping to keep bub's muscles working
- keeping bub's immune system working to fight diseases and infections
- helping bub's brain to develop and grow.

What might happen if bub has low iron?

They may feel tired or faint



They get sick often and are not able to fight off infections



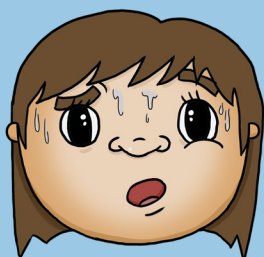
There may be changes in their behaviour



They don't eat much or they want to eat ice or sand



They have pale skin



They have headaches, dizziness or light headedness



They have a fast heartbeat or shortness of breath



Sometimes there are no signs or symptoms

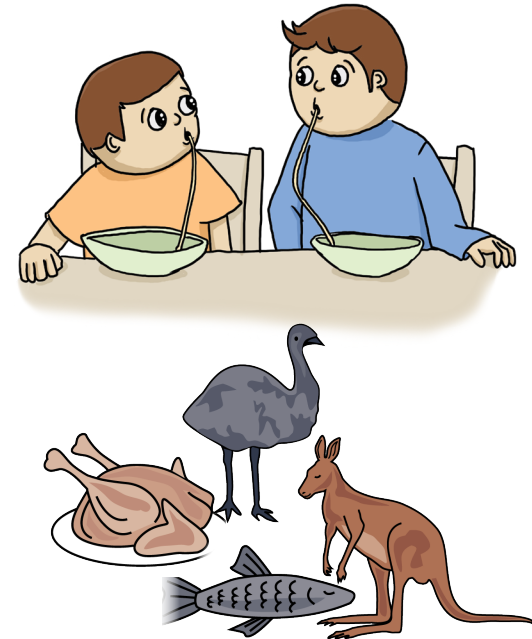
Where bub can get iron from?

There are 2 types of iron that are important for bub's health.

- **Haem iron** - bub will get this when they eat meat. This iron is easily absorbed by the body. Bub needs to have this kind of iron at least once a day.
- **Non-haem iron** - bub will get this from vegetables, legumes (chickpeas, kidney bean and baked beans), cereals (porridge, cornflakes) and nuts. Peanut butter and nuts (whole nuts **not recommended** for kids under 5 years).
- These kinds of foods also need to be included in bub's meals.

How much iron does bub need?

Age	Recommended daily intake
7-12 months	11mg/day
1-3 years	9mg/day
4-8 years	10mg/day
9-13 years	8mg/day
14-18 years (boy)	11mg/day
14-18 years (girl)	15mg/day



Food high in iron?

Food	Serve size	Iron (mg)	Food	Serve size	Iron (mg)
Lean beef/lamb	100g	2-3	Chickpeas	1/2 cup	6.2
Chicken/turkey/pork	100g	1	Tofu	100g	7.9
Fish	100g	1	Soybeans	1/2 cup	2.5
Egg	1 large	1	Lentils	1/2 cup	1.8
Chicken liver	100g	11	Kidney beans	1/2 cup	2.0
Kangaroo	100g	3.2	Baked beans	1/2 cup	1.4
Fish (white)	100g	0.3	Cashews	10	0.8
Salmon	100g	1.3	Almonds	10	0.4
Tinned tuna	70g	0.7	Peanut butter	1 tbs	0.5
Fortified infant cereal ¹	5 tbs	5.2	Beetroot	3 slices	1.2
Fortified cereal ²	30g	2.8	Asparagus	5 spears	1
Rolled oats	30g	1.1	Spinach (raw)	1/2 cup	0.6
Muesli	1/3 cup	2	Green beans	1/2 cup	1
White bread	1 slice	0.3	Broccoli	1/2 cup	0.4
Wholemeal bread	1 slice	0.7	Sultanas	1 tbs	0.3
Pasta (cooked)	1/2 cup	0.3	Dried apricots	5 halves	0.8
Brown rice (cooked)	1/2 cup	0.4	Prune juice	180mL	2.5
White rice (cooked)	1/2 cup	0.3	Custard	1/2 cup	0.4

1 - **Fortified infant cereal** like Nestle CERELAC Baby Rice Infant Cereal.

2 - **Fortified cereal** like Sanitarium Weet-bix, Uncle Toby's Plus (Iron), Kellogg's Corn Flakes Gluten Free³, Kellogg's Rice Bubbles.

Very important to know!

- Caffeine from tea, coffee and cola drinks can stop bub's body absorbing iron. It's healthier for bub not to have any of these drinks.
- Eating foods that contain Vitamin C helps non-haem iron be absorbed into the body, some good Vitamin C foods are: citrus fruit, kiwi fruit, strawberries, pineapple, capsicum, tomato, broccoli and snow peas.

Healthy iron rich food ideas

- Every day, have 1 serve of: red meat or chicken or fish or pork or eggs.
- Give bub dried fruit and nuts for a snack (whole nuts not recommended for kids under 5 years).
- Give bub wholemeal bread and wholemeal pasta instead of white.
- Give bub sandwiches with tuna, ham, sliced chicken or egg.
- Add fruit to help with iron absorption.
- Choose a breakfast cereal with added iron (e.g. weet-bix, baby rice cereal).
- Have baked beans on wholemeal toast.
- Spread nut butter or hummus on bread or crackers.
- Add legumes (lentils, chickpeas or kidney beans) to soups, casseroles and stews.

Vegetarian or vegan

If bub is vegetarian or vegan, they will need more iron rich foods to make sure they get enough iron. They will need to eat plenty of legumes, fruit, vegetables, ground nuts and seeds, soy products including tofu, wholemeal breads and cereals.

What about giving bub cow's milk

Cow's milk is very low in iron and will fill bub's tummy up so they won't want to eat food. This can lead to bub having low iron.

Children under 12 months should only be given infant formula or breast milk.

Children over 12 months need less than 500mL of milk per day (less than 2 cups).



Government of **Western Australia**
Child and Adolescent Health Service

Child and Adolescent Health Service
15 Hospital Avenue, Nedlands, WA, 6009.
Telephone: (08) 6456 2222
Produced by: Nutrition and Dietetics / Social Work
Ref: 949.1 © CAHS 2022

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

Disclaimer: This publication is for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

© State of Western Australia, Child and Adolescent Health Service.