

Foods High in Iron

Choose these foods for lots of iron:

Meats:

- Clams
- Liver
- Beef
- Turkey, chicken, fish, pork

Non-Meat Foods:

- WIC cereals, enriched
- Beans, dried peas
- Prune juice
- Tofu
- Eggs
- Bread and tortillas, enriched
- Rice, pasta and cooked cereal, enriched
- Leafy greens: collards, chard, kale, mustard
- Dried fruit

Foods with the most iron are at the top of the list.

Some babies may be allergic to pork, seafood, tofu, or corn.



Sample menu for you or your child

Breakfast	WIC cereal with fruit and milk, orange juice, toast 
Snack	Crackers with peanut butter, fruit 
Lunch	Soft tacos with beans and meat, lettuce, tomatoes, and milk 
Snack	Tuna sandwich 
Dinner	Chicken with rice, broccoli and carrots, fruit and milk 

Try this recipe for Eggs Mexicali:

- 2 cups salsa or tomato sauce
- 15 oz can of beans (pinto, black, etc.), rinsed and drained, or 2 cups cooked beans
- 6-8 eggs
- 1/4 cup cheese, grated

Recipe Directions:

1. Combine salsa and beans in a pan.
2. Cook over medium heat stirring until the mixture boils.
3. Crack each egg and place over the mixture one at a time.
4. Cover with a lid and cook until the eggs are firm—about 6 minutes.
5. Sprinkle with grated cheese and heat until the cheese melts.
6. Serve with tortillas and rice. Serves 4-6.

Iron for Strong Blood

Eating iron foods can help you and your family stay healthy and feel good!



California Department of Public Health,
California WIC Program
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Why do I need iron?

Everyone needs iron for:

- strong blood to carry oxygen to the whole body
- preventing colds and flu
- keeping energy levels up
- growing well

What is anemia?

If your blood is low in iron, you have anemia. Anemia can make you or your child:

- look pale, feel tired and weak, act cranky
- eat poorly
- not grow well
- get sick more easily, get infections and headaches
- have trouble learning, and do poorly in school or work

If you are pregnant, your baby could be born too soon or too small.

How can I get enough iron for myself and my family?



Babies:

- **Breastfeed your baby.** Breastmilk has everything your baby needs! If you give your baby formula, always use **formula with iron**. Wait until about one year to give your baby cow's milk.

- **At about 6 months, start baby cereal with iron**, mixed with breastmilk or formula. Keep feeding

your baby the baby cereal at least until one year old. You can mix it with other cereals or fruits. You can even make cookies with baby cereal!

- **From 6 to 9 months, start mashed fruits and vegetables, baby meats, mashed beans, or tofu.** If you use baby meats, choose plain meats instead of meats mixed with vegetables, rice or noodles. You can also cook ground meat and mash it for your baby. Give your baby a vitamin C fruit or vegetable at least once a day. See the list in this pamphlet for some ideas. Babies do not need juices.

- **Start teaching your baby to use a cup around 6 months. Then stop giving your baby a bottle at around one year.**



Many children who use a bottle after one year drink too much milk, juice or other liquids. They are not hungry at mealtime.

- After your child's first birthday, **3 to 4 small servings of milk or milk products a day** (16 ounces) is enough, and **only 4 ounces of juice**.

Children and adults:

- **Eat 2 to 3 foods that are high in iron every day.** Look at the list in this pamphlet for some ideas. WIC cereals are great snacks for your children!

- **Eat vitamin C foods when you eat iron foods.** Check the list in this pamphlet.

- **Drink milk, juice, or water with meals.** Coffee and tea can make you take in less iron from the food you eat. If you drink coffee or tea, drink them between meals.



If you are pregnant, be sure to take your **prenatal vitamins**. They have extra iron. If you have low iron, ask your doctor about taking **iron pills**. After your baby is born, you may still need to take prenatal vitamins or iron pills.

If your baby or child has low iron, their doctor might give you **iron drops** for them. Be careful to give the right amount of iron drops, and not too much!

Warning: Keep all iron pills and iron drops away from children. Too much iron from pills or drops can poison your child!! Just 10 iron pills can kill a small child!!

Some tips to get more iron...

- **Add a little bit of meat to other foods.**
- **Cook foods in cast iron** skillets, pots, or pans (heavy black ones).
- **Soak dry beans** for several hours in cold water before you cook them. **Pour off the water** and use new water to cook the beans.

Eat vitamin C foods with iron foods:

Vitamin C helps your body use iron. Eat a vitamin C food when you eat iron foods, or cook them together. Examples:

- Drink a glass of orange juice with your breakfast cereal
- Cook your beans with some tomatoes
- Have some salsa on your taco
- Give your baby some fruit with her cereal



Some high vitamin C foods are:

Vegetables

potato
tomato
broccoli
cauliflower
cabbage
bell pepper

Fruits

orange
cantaloupe
mango
papaya
grapefruit
strawberry

Juices

orange
grapefruit
tomato
lemon
lime
all WIC juices



Some babies may be allergic to tomatoes, oranges, grapefruit, or strawberries.