How to use iron supplements?

To treat iron-deficiency anemia, supplements should be taken as prescribed by your doctor.

Iron supplements are absorbed best when taken with a source of Vitamin C, or on an empty stomach.

General tips:

- Serve beef, lamb, chicken, or organ meats every day.
- Select cereal, bread, rice, and pasta with the words 'iron-enriched' or 'iron-fortified' on the label.
- Serving tomato and citrus fruit (orange and grapefruit) with iron-rich foods to increase iron absorption.
- Use meat or chicken broth instead of water to moisten food.
- Use dried fruits (dates, raisins, prunes, apricots) as snacks, or to be added on hot cereals and desserts.
- Add minced meat to starchy foods (i.e. rice, pasta, pastries).
- Consume whole-wheat or enriched breads and cereals.
- Limit the intake of junk foods (i.e. chips, soft drinks).

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19-0308

Guidelines to Improve Your Child's Iron Levels



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Guidelines to Improve Your Child's Iron Levels

Iron is a mineral everyone needs to keep their body working at its best. When the body does not have enough iron, a child can develop iron-deficiency anemia. This causes the child to look pale and feel tired and irritable.

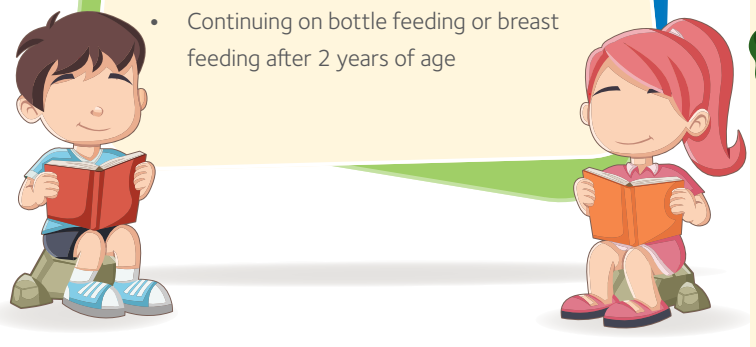
To be healthy, growing children need a constant supply of iron, otherwise, their iron stores become low.

What are the causes of iron deficiency?

Iron deficiency can occur in babies and children if they have a diet low in iron-containing foods, or if their body has trouble absorbing iron.

Other possible factors of iron deficiency include:

- Depending mainly on low-iron drinks as a source of iron (i.e. milk, juices, soft drinks).
- Consuming a diet lacking in iron-containing foods (i.e. junk food, starches, sweets).
- Consuming products that reduce iron absorption (i.e. tea and coffee).
- Continuing on bottle feeding or breast feeding after 2 years of age



What foods are good sources of iron?

Iron is found in many animal and plant food sources.

1. Animal sources (heme iron). The human body can absorb heme iron better than non-heme iron.
2. Plant sources (non-heme iron). The human body can absorb non-heme iron better when eating it with foods that contain Vitamin C (i.e. oranges, citrus fruit, guava, strawberries, green or red peppers, and tomato).

Heme Iron Foods (Animal Sources):	Non-Heme Iron Foods (Plant Sources)
Red meat	Iron-enriched baby food
Organ meat (liver, kidney, heart)	Dried fruits
Poultry	Legumes
Fish and seafood	Green leafy vegetables
	*Vitamin C intake improves the absorption of non-heme iron.



Getting Enough Iron at Different Ages

1. **Babies**

- Breastmilk contains enough iron to prevent anemia during the first 4 to 6 months of life. After this, babies need other sources of iron in their diet, such as meat and iron-fortified cereal.
- If a baby depends on bottle-feeding, use an iron-fortified formula until your baby is at least one year of age.
- An iron-fortified infant cereal can be introduced at 6 months of age and can be continued until your child is 2 years old.
- Meat is an excellent source of iron. Thus, make it the main component of the baby's daily meals.



2. **Children**

Children who depend mainly on milk or juice are at risk for iron-deficiency anemia.

To help children over 2 years of age get enough iron, you should do the following:

- Offer milk from a cup instead of a bottle.
- Don't over consume milk and limit milk intake to three cups every day.
- Offer food rich in iron daily.
- Limit juice to ½ cup per day.

