



Heathly Hints from Earth's Best: Getting Iron into Your Baby and Toddler's Diet

Babies are born with iron stores to last the first four months of life. After that time, a rich, dietary source is needed to supply this important mineral necessary for proper nerve, brain, and muscle development and functioning. Breast milk iron is well absorbed, but there's not enough to meet the big demands. Not all formulas contain iron. A long-term iron deficiency in infancy can have lifelong negative consequences. Getting enough is paramount. Children under one need 11 mg of iron per day. Children one to three need 7 mg. Following are some ways to get iron into your baby's diet.



Fortified foods: Recognizing the high iron need of infants and toddlers, many manufacturers of children's foods will fortify them with iron. Such foods include instant baby cereal like Earth's Best iron fortified [infant cereals](#) and children's snack items such as Earth's Best [Crunchin' Blocks and Cereal Bars](#). Adding these foods daily will help babies and children get their necessary iron.

Iron rich foods: Include some of these best food* sources of iron every day:

- Lean beef, chicken and pork
- Seafood, especially canned tuna and salmon
- Leafy greens
- Tofu, soybeans, and cooked dried beans

*Note that the iron in meat is better absorbed than the iron in plant foods.

Serve iron rich foods and supplements with vitamin C: Add a good source of vitamin C to each meal that contains iron. The vitamin C found in juice is a kid pleasing and easy way to enhance iron absorption. Use it to swallow the iron supplement, or serve along side iron enriched cereal, or with iron rich snacks. Earth's Best offers vitamin C rich [apple and pear juice](#). Other good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, cantaloupe, sweet peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, kiwi and broccoli.



Supplements : The need for iron during the early years is crucial, and often the only way to ensure a child gets what they need is with an iron supplement. Speak to your pediatrician before adding a supplement to be sure your baby is getting enough, but not too much.

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