



Feeding the under 3s
the food they need

How to get enough iron in your toddler's diet

Guidance & Tips for Parents

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IRON: THE FACTS



IRON: MEAL IDEAS RICH
IN IRON



It is important that toddlers get enough iron in their diet to prevent them from becoming anaemic. When toddlers are anaemic, the blood is unable to supply all the oxygen that the body needs.

Symptoms and signs of anaemia include: looking pale, being tired all the time, irritable behaviour and suffering a lot of infections. Anaemia can also slow down your toddler's mental development.

- Foods that are the best source of iron are red meat (beef, lamb and pork), dark poultry meat (chicken legs and thighs), meat products and oily fish. Liver is a good source of iron but should be limited to once per week because it contains high amounts of vitamin A.
- If your child does not eat meat they will get their iron from eggs, lentils, dhal, chickpeas, hummus and other pulses, fortified breakfast cereals, chopped nuts, nut butters, bread and green leafy vegetables.
- Vitamin C in fruit and vegetables helps the body to absorb iron from eggs, cereals and vegetable foods.
- Do not let your toddler drink tea with meals because this reduces the absorption of iron from foods.
- Toddlers who drink too much cows' milk every day and do not eat a healthy balanced diet may not get enough iron. After their first birthday about three cups of milk of 120mls (4oz) each day is enough. Toddlers do not need large bottles of milk.
- Follow-on milks and growing up milks are fortified with iron. These can be used in place of cows' milk if you are worried that your toddler does not eat enough iron-rich foods.

If you are concerned that your toddler might be anaemic or iron deficient, seek advice from your health visitor or doctor.