



## New Jersey WIC

# Stay Strong With Iron



## Importance of Iron

Iron is an important mineral that carries oxygen through our bodies. Most people are able to get enough iron from their food to meet their body's iron needs, but it has to be the right food.

### Iron helps with:

- Energy levels
- Appetite
- Staying focused
- Keeping our immune system strong

### Who needs extra iron?

- ✓ Pregnant women. Pregnant women need extra iron to support growth of the baby. After childbirth women need extra iron to make up for the blood loss during childbirth.
- ✓ Infants & children. As they grow, their blood supplies grow. Extra iron keeps their blood supplies healthy and growing properly.

### Iron Deficiency Anemia is caused by having too little iron in your blood.

#### Someone with anemia or low iron may:

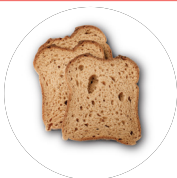
- Look pale or have dry skin.
- Feel tired or weak.
- Not grow well.
- Get sick more easily.
- Have trouble learning or struggle with work or school. Children with healthy iron levels are able to learn better.



## Food High in Iron

We get most of the iron we need through the foods we eat.

### Sources of iron include:



**Iron fortified grains**  
(bread, tortilla, brown rice, pasta)



**Legumes**  
(peas, beans, lentils)



**Lean red meats, fish,**  
chicken, turkey



**Dark, leafy green**  
vegetables

# Food High in Iron cont.

## Sources of iron include:



Eggs



Tofu



WIC approved cereals



Dried fruits

# Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps your body take in iron. Pair Vitamin C foods with iron rich foods.

## Sources of Vitamin C include:

- Oranges
- Grapefruit
- Tomatoes
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Potatoes
- Strawberries
- Melon
- Kiwi
- Sweet potatoes
- WIC approved juices



## Try these Vitamin C + Iron food combinations:



WIC Cereal



WIC Juice



Crackers



WIC Peanut Butter



Fruit



Soft Tacos



Beans & Meat



Salad (Lettuce & Tomato)



Stir Fried Chicken



Brown Rice



Broccoli

# Tips for Getting Enough Iron

- **Eat a variety of foods during the day.** Most healthy foods have small amounts of iron, so eat foods from all the food groups. Focus on including iron rich foods with each meal.
- **Choose beverages wisely.** Coffee and tea can make it hard for your body to use iron. If you drink coffee or tea, drink them between meals.
- **If you are pregnant, take your prenatal vitamins.** They have extra iron. Remember to take any vitamin or iron supplement if recommended by your health care provider.
- **Eat a vitamin C food when you eat iron rich foods.** Vitamin C helps your body take in iron.
- **When eating iron rich foods limit the amount of milk, cheese, and yogurt eaten at the same time.** Dairy is a good source of calcium and protein but not iron. Calcium in dairy products can block iron absorption from food. 16-24 ounces of milk a day is enough milk for a child.

# Iron for Older Babies



Iron fortified infant cereal and pureed meats may be given to infants starting at 6 months. Continue to give breast milk or iron fortified infant formula until 12 months of age.

	Grains	Vegetables	Protein
8-9 Months	Infant cereal Plain whole grain bread Plain rice or pasta	Cooked, strained or mashed broccoli, peas, kale and spinach	Pureed, ground or finely chopped meats or poultry
10-12 Months	Warm cereal, such as oatmeal or cream of wheat If baby has pincer grasp, try o-shaped cereal Plain, whole grain bread Plain, rice or pasta	Cooked, strained, mashed or bite size pieces of broccoli, spinach, kale and peas Peas can be a choking hazard if not mashed	Chopped or ground lean meat, fish and chicken Cooked egg yolk Mashed beans