

# IRON DEFICIENCY IN TODDLERS GUIDANCE AND TIPS FOR PARENTS



- 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 from animals are the best source of iron, such as red meat (beef, lamb and pork), dark poultry meat (chicken legs and thighs), meat products, shellfish 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 you should include oily fish, eggs, crushed and finely ground nuts, lentils, dhal, chickpeas, hummus or other pulses along with green leafy vegetables and fruit at all meals and some snacks.
- Choose breakfast cereals that are fortified with iron or oat porridge as oats are good for iron.
- 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 per 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.

## Meals and snacks suitable for toddlers which are high in iron

Meals	Snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liver pate sandwich or on toast</li><li>• Any meals containing red meat or dark poultry meat</li><li>• Fish or meat paste sandwich</li><li>• Bacon sandwich</li><li>• Hot dog sausage in bread roll</li><li>• Taramasalata and pitta bread</li><li>• Peanut butter sandwich with fruit pieces</li><li>• Hummus and tortilla chips with two small tomatoes</li><li>• Baked beans on toast with small green salad</li><li>• Portion of dhal and chapatti with a slice of mango</li><li>• Dried fruit with orange segments as the second course/pudding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breakfast cereals fortified with iron with milk and fresh fruit slices</li><li>• Drinking chocolate made with follow-on or growing up milk</li><li>• Banana</li><li>• Slice of fruit cake or dark ginger cake with orange segments</li><li>• Digestive biscuit with a handful of strawberries</li><li>• One slice of malt bread with fresh pineapple pieces</li></ul>

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



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