

# WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN IRON AND STRONG IMMUNITY IN YOUR CHILD?

## A 9-MONTH-OLD BABY CAN NEED AS MUCH IRON AS AN 18-YEAR-OLD BOY

For normal growth during periods of intense development, iron is needed in high quantities. It's vitally important for brain development and proper immune system function. The immune system helps us fight infections. Only when our levels drop do we fully appreciate the many health benefits of iron.

We often worry about essential minerals and vitamins in our child's diet. Ensuring they have all the building blocks of good nutrition for normal health and development is no simple task. Often iron deficiencies go unseen and untreated. Without intervention, a child whose diet does not contain enough iron may develop an iron deficiency or even anaemia. Putting in place good eating habits early on can help alleviate the risk of unwanted side effects.

## 1 IRON UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Millions of red blood cells enter the bloodstream daily. Each cell contains the protein haemoglobin.

Oxygen attaches to the haemoglobin and is carried to every cell in your body. Iron is needed to make haemoglobin. Without enough iron in your diet oxygen is not effectively delivered around your body causing lethargy, breathlessness and poor memory.



## 2 IS MY CHILD GETTING ENOUGH IRON?

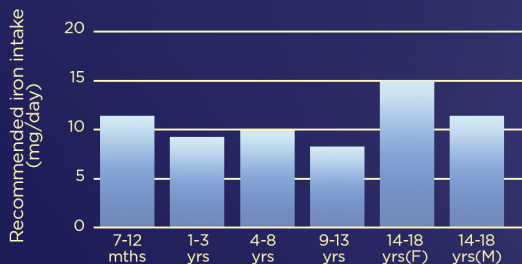
Eating a variety of foods makes maintaining good iron levels simple. Fussy eaters whose diets lack variety may not be consuming enough iron to meet their daily needs. Low iron intake can become iron deficiency and even anaemia increasing your risk of abnormal blood formation, impaired growth, poor cognitive development and compromised immunity.



## 3 DAILY IRON INTAKE GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD

These values are a guideline to help create healthy iron intake targets for different stages of life.

Recommended daily iron consumption targets for infants, toddlers and adolescents<sup>1</sup>.



## 4 COULD YOU OR YOUR CHILD BE IRON DEFICIENT?

The 5 signs of iron deficiency<sup>2</sup>:



## 5 IS YOUR CHILD SHOWING SIGNS OF ANAEMIA?

It is thought that up to five per cent of the Australian population has iron-deficiency anaemia.<sup>2</sup>

Babies, toddlers, preschoolers and teenagers are most at risk of being iron deficient due to their need for increased iron during high growth periods. If your child is vegetarian, vegan or a fussy eater and not consuming a broad range of foods they may also make the list.

Treating iron deficiency can be straightforward like changes to diet, adding food products fortified with iron or taking supplements. Should you have any concerns about your child's iron levels or think they show symptoms of iron deficiency consult your Doctor or Healthcare Professional.



This is general advice and not intended to substitute medical advice. Please consult your healthcare professional for individualised advice.

1. Iron | Nutrient Reference Values (nrv.gov.au) - <https://www.nrv.gov.au/nutrients/iron>  
2. Better Health Channel [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/iron](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/iron) (Accessed: 1st Sept 2021)