

# Iron

Information for parents and carers



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Leeds children's  
hospital

caring about children

Children with medical conditions or poor dietary intake can sometimes develop low vitamins and minerals levels. Whilst in many instances this can be managed with medication, it is also beneficial to ensure good dietary sources as well.

Your child has a low level of Iron. The following contains some information on food sources to help improve this.

**Here is also a link to a helpful fact sheet:**

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/iron-rich-foods-iron-deficiency.html>

Iron is essential to make red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body. It is important we get enough iron in the diet for prevention of nutritional anaemia. It also plays a part in energy production and the immune system.

Iron can be found as either haem iron (from animal sources) or non-haem iron (from non-animal sources) Haem iron is absorbed more effectively than non-haem iron. The absorption of non-haem iron can be enhanced by Vitamin C (E.g. oranges, kiwi, raw pepper, blackcurrants, cabbage, cauliflower, mango) but also hindered by tannins found in tea.

**Best food sources of haem iron:**

- Red meat e.g. beef, lamb and pork
- Offal e.g. liver and liver pâté
- Chicken and turkey (the darker meat around the legs and thigh)
- Oily fish – sardines, pilchards, mackerel, salmon, fresh tuna, herring

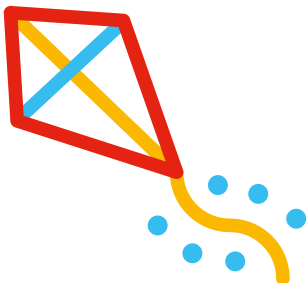
## Best sources of non-haem iron:

- Fortified breakfast cereals, e.g. Cheerios, Shreddies, Shredded Wheat,
- Eggs
- Fortified bread
- Dried apricots
- Pulses and beans, e.g. chickpeas, baked beans, kidney beans
- Dark green leafy vegetables e.g. spinach, cabbage, broccoli

If your Doctor has recommended taking an iron supplement please be aware that certain food and drinks, can reduce the absorption of oral iron.

It is recommended to take iron on an empty stomach to allow for better absorption, although it can be taken after food to reduce gastro-intestinal side-effects if necessary.

Certain food and drinks, such as milk or dairy products, eggs, unprocessed bran, tea, and coffee can reduce the absorption of oral iron so it is sensible to avoid taking these foods at the same time as your iron supplement.





## What did you think of your care?

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