

Yorkshire Regional Centre for
Paediatric & Adolescent Oncology and Haematology

Dietary advice to help increase your zinc intake

Information for patients,
parents and carers



leeds children's
hospital

caring about children

Does my child need a zinc supplement?

Depending on the level of zinc in your child's blood the doctor may recommend a zinc supplement for your child. It is important your child takes the recommended supplement as a higher dose may cause your child to have abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or gastric irritation.

An over the counter supplement may not be suitable as the dose may be too high or it may contain other nutrients e.g. iron which your child does not need.

There is some evidence to suggest that zinc deficiency may be common in children with sickle cell disease and that zinc supplementation may help to reduce the frequency and severity of a sickle cell crisis.

Zinc supplementation may also help wound healing, decrease the incidence of infection and help to improve growth in children with sickle cell disease.

Good sources of zinc in the diet

The following foods are good sources of zinc in the diet and can help to increase your child's dietary zinc intake.

It would be helpful to try to include at least one of the following foods with two of your child's main meals:

- Red meat - beef, lamb, pork
- Poultry - chicken, turkey
- Fish - both white fish and oily fish
- Shellfish
- Eggs
- Milk and milk products - yogurt, ice cream, cheese (try to encourage your child to drink more milk or have more yogurts)

Other sources of zinc in the diet

The following foods are also good sources of zinc but the zinc is not so easily absorbed and used by the body as the good sources listed previously:

- Bread and cereal products
- Green leafy vegetables
- Pulses - beans, lentils, dahl

