



Dietary Advice for Families

# Iron Deficiency Anaemia



Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## Why is iron important?

Iron is essential for good health and we need it to make red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body. When iron levels are very low this is called iron deficiency anaemia.

We often speak about anaemia or someone being anaemic.

An anaemic person can look pale, feel tired, irritable and have a reduced appetite.

If your child has iron deficiency anaemia, it is important to include three or more iron-rich foods in their diet every day.

### Good sources of iron

- ♦ Red meat - beef, lamb, pork
- ♦ Meat products - sausages, burgers, corned beef
- ♦ Dark poultry meat - chicken legs & thighs
- ♦ Oily fish such as sardines and mackerel

### Other sources of iron

- ♦ Fortified breakfast cereal
- ♦ Bread, especially wholemeal
- ♦ Pulses such as baked beans and lentils
- ♦ Eggs
- ♦ Green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage and spinach
- ♦ Dried fruit

## Fluids

### Milk

All infants should get either breast milk or infant formula as their main drink until they are 1 year old, as this contains more vitamins and minerals than cow's milk.

Toddlers do not need large quantities of milk. Children who fill up on milk do not have a healthy balanced diet and may not get enough iron.

**Restrict milk to about 300mls a day.**

## Tea

Tea contains “tannins”, which reduce the absorption of iron; therefore, young children should not drink tea.

## Vitamin C

To help the body absorb iron, especially from non-meat sources of iron, try to give foods that are rich in Vitamin C such as fruit, vegetables, fresh fruit juices or sugar free fruit squash during the day.

You should dilute fresh fruit juice with water and give it to you children in a cup. (It should be 50% or 1/2 fruit juice and 50% or 1/2 water). Be careful not to allow your child to take too much to drink as large quantities of fluids can reduce their appetite.

Aim for 6-8 glasses of water or sugar free diluting juice every day (may need more in hot weather or after lots of physical activity).

All children under the age of 5 years should take **Healthy Start** vitamin drops daily – Ask for them at your local chemist.

## Meal ideas

- ◆ Fortified breakfast cereal with dried or fresh fruit
- ◆ Hard boiled egg on toast and a piece of fruit
- ◆ Baked beans on toast and a glass of diluted fruit juice
- ◆ Sardines on toast
- ◆ Lentil soup served with bread and a glass of diluted fruit juice
- ◆ Hummus with pitta bread and salad vegetables
- ◆ Corned beef sandwiches
- ◆ Beef or mixed bean casserole with potatoes and vegetables
- ◆ Lamb or lentil curry with rice
- ◆ Steak pie with potatoes and vegetables