

Iron

For Women and Children 3-5 years old



Name: _____

Date: _____ Hemoglobin: _____

What is iron?

Iron helps your body make red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen to every cell in your body. Your body needs oxygen to stay alert, learn, and grow.

Why is iron important?

Iron helps your body fight germs and sickness. When your body is low in iron, you may feel tired. Children with low iron may also have a harder time learning.

Iron is especially important for moms before, during, and after pregnancy, and while breastfeeding. If you are pregnant, your health care provider will ask you to take prenatal vitamins, and may ask you to take iron pills if your iron is low. After your baby is born, you may still need your prenatal vitamin or iron pills. Ask your health care provider to be sure.

WIC staff may measure how much iron is in your blood by testing your hemoglobin level. Foods high in iron are the key to good hemoglobin levels. A nutritionist at WIC can help you create an eating plan that is right for you and your family.

What can my family and I eat to get enough iron?*

BEST SOURCES OF IRON



WIC approved cereal



Beans and lentils



Cooked meat (beef, pork, chicken, turkey)



Tofu



Tuna fish or cooked, flaked fish low in mercury – check carefully that there are no bones.

OTHER GOOD SOURCES OF IRON



Cooked eggs



Spinach, kale, and other leafy greens



Peanut butter



Broccoli



Whole wheat bread, tortillas, pasta, and rice



Hummus

**To prevent choking, serve all foods in the size and texture safe for your child.*

Absorb more iron!

Vitamin C helps your body use more iron. When you eat foods high in iron, eat them with foods that have lots of vitamin C, too.

SOURCES OF VITAMIN C



Cauliflower



Tomatoes



Oranges



Mango



Strawberries



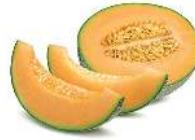
Broccoli



Bell peppers



Kiwis



Melons



Papayas



100% Fruit juice

Try these winning combinations:

- Cooked beef, pork, or chicken in quesadillas with diced tomatoes or salsa
- WIC approved cereal with fruit
- Whole wheat pasta with cooked ground beef and tomato sauce
- Brown rice and beans with broccoli



Think about drinks!

Milk is high in calcium, but low in iron. Juice is also low in iron. Children who drink a lot of milk or juice get filled up faster and usually eat less food—including iron-rich foods.

Talk to a nutritionist at WIC or your child's health care provider about how much milk and juice your child should drink.

Moms:

Be aware that drinking coffee and tea with high iron foods makes it harder for your body to use iron.

Some steps that I am already taking:

New things that I will try:

You can do this! You are on the right track; small changes lead to success!

If you have any further concerns about iron, contact your health care provider.



**WIC
Program**