

# IRON FOR TODDLERS



**IRON IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOUR  
TODDLER'S WELLBEING**

**DID YOU KNOW?  
A TODDLER NEEDS JUST AS MUCH IRON AS A MAN!**

## IRON HELPS YOUR TODDLER BY...

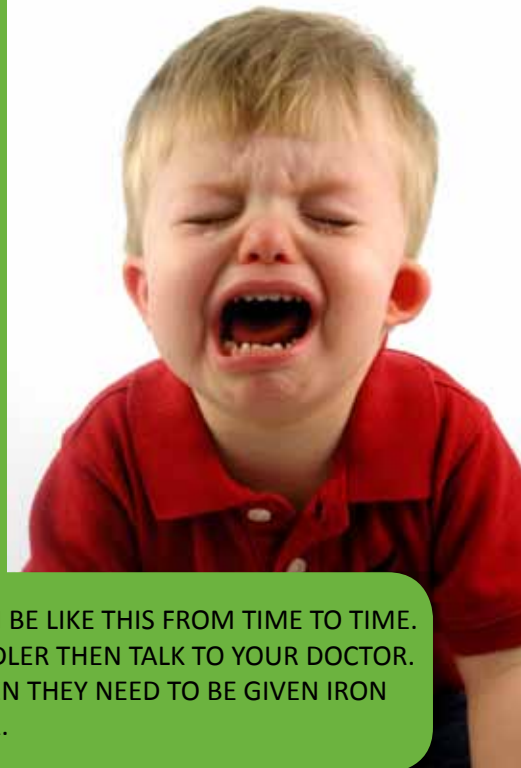
- Carrying oxygen to the brain and muscles
- Supporting growth and brain development
- Releasing energy from the food they eat

## IS YOUR TODDLER LOW IN IRON? “IRON DEFICIENT”

### DOES YOUR TODDLER SHOW SOME OF THESE SIGNS?

- Pale
- Tired
- Poor concentration
- Irritable and grumpy

BUT WE KNOW THAT ALL TODDLERS CAN BE LIKE THIS FROM TIME TO TIME. IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR TODDLER THEN TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR. IF YOUR TODDLER IS IRON DEFICIENT THEN THEY NEED TO BE GIVEN IRON MEDICINE PRESCRIBED BY YOUR DOCTOR.



TODDLERS NEED TO EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS HIGH IN IRON. NOT ALL IRON IS THE SAME. SOME FOODS CONTAIN IRON THAT IS MORE EASILY USED BY THE BODY THAN OTHERS.

## EXCELLENT SOURCES OF IRON

- Lean beef
- Lean Lamb
- Kidney
- Venison
- Liver (no more than three teaspoons once a week )
- Shellfish for example: paua, mussels
- Iron fortified toddler milk

THE REDDER THE MEAT -  
THE HIGHER THE IRON CONTENT



## GOOD SOURCES OF IRON

- Fish
- Chicken
- Pork

## USEFUL SOURCES OF IRON BASED ON TODDLER PORTION SIZES

- Baked beans
- Eggs
- Wholemeal bread
- Fruit bread
- Iron fortified breakfast cereal
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Marmite® (no more than one teaspoon a day)

New Zealand Research has shown that eating red meat (particularly beef) can help stop toddlers' iron levels dropping. Replacing ordinary cow's milk with iron fortified toddler milk can increase toddlers' iron levels. (1) If you are breastfeeding please continue, along with offering these iron rich foods.

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## IMPORTANT TIPS

### TEA

- Stops iron being used by the body. Do not give tea to your toddler.



### COW'S MILK

- Cow's milk is a healthy drink and most toddlers need around 500mls (2 cups) in a day.
- Drinking too much milk is filling for a toddler's small stomach and this may decrease intake of iron rich foods.
- Give milk **between meals or after meals** so your toddler eats a variety of other foods too.



## FOODS THAT HELP THE BODY TO USE IRON

Eating meals and snacks with a food high in Vitamin C, meat, chicken or fish helps the body take in more iron (up to 4 times as much).

### FOODS HIGH IN VITAMIN C

- Orange
- Kiwifruit
- Strawberries
- Feijoas
- Bananas
- Mandarin
- Rockmelon
- Tamarillos
- Broccoli
- Capsicum
- Cauliflower
- Tomatoes



NOTE: ALL OF THESE RECIPES INCLUDE FOODS HIGH IN IRON AND A VITAMIN C CONTAINING FOOD.

## LASAGNE FOR EVERYONE!!

### INGREDIENTS

(SERVES A FAMILY OF FOUR)

- 500g lean minced beef or other meat\*
- 1 onion finely diced
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 4 Tbsp tomato paste
- 400g can of chopped tomatoes
- 250g lasagne sheets

### Sauce layer

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup tasty cheese, grated

### METHOD

1. Fry mince, onion and garlic in a dry pan, stirring until brown.
2. Add tomato paste, can of tomatoes and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Set aside the mince mixture and prepare the sauce in a separate pot.
4. Combine oil and flour, gradually add milk while stirring.
5. Simmer till thickened, add cheese and remove from heat.
6. Cut the lasagne sheets to

fit a greased 8 cup capacity lasagne dish.

7. Put one layer of lasagne on the bottom spread over half the meat mixture and half the sauce from the pot, repeat.
8. Cook in the oven for 50 minutes at 160°C .
9. Serve with plenty of vegetables or a salad

\*For a vegetarian option use 420g can of kidney beans or lentils (drained and rinsed)



## CHOP SUEY (SAPASUII)

### INGREDIENTS

(SERVES A FAMILY OF FOUR)

- 60g vermicelli
- ¼ cup hot water
- 1 tsp oil
- 300g beef steak \*(thinly sliced)
- 1 onion diced
- 2 cup mixed vegetables
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp water

### METHOD

1. Cover the vermicelli with hot water, soak until soft, then drain.
2. Heat oil in a large sauce pan or wok, add onion and beef steak, stir fry for 4-5 minutes.
3. Add the vermicelli, mixed vegetables, water and soy sauce to the pan.
4. Simmer for 15–20 minutes or until steak is tender.

\*For a vegetarian option use canned or cooked dried beans such as kidney or soy



## RED LENTIL DAHL

### INGREDIENTS

(SERVES A FAMILY OF FOUR)

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 2 tsp crushed garlic
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 cup red lentils
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 3 cups water

### METHOD

1. Fry garlic and spices in oil for 2 minutes.
2. Add the lentils and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add the water and lemon juice.
4. Bring to the boil then simmer for 15-20 minutes.
5. Serve with pita bread or chapatti



## MEAT AND FISH MEAL IDEAS

### LUNCH

- Mini meatballs with tomato sauce
- Meat diced in vegetable soup
- Liver paté on bread fingers and vegetable sticks
- Sardines on toast with capsicum

### DINNER

- Savoury mince with broccoli
- Lasagne and salad
- Roast meat and vegetables
- Kai moana and vegetables
- Fish pie and tomato
- Spaghetti Bolognese

## VEGETARIAN MEAL IDEAS

### LUNCH

- Cheese and Marmite sandwich with vegetable sticks
- Scrambled egg with wholemeal bread and orange slices
- Baked potato with baked bean topping and fruit slices

### DINNER

- Spinach and broccoli frittata
- Mini burgers with falafel and salad
- Red kidney bean and vegetable stir-fry

This resource booklet was produced as part of Julia Wilson's requirements for her University of Otago Post Graduate Diploma in Dietetics with help from the Auckland region paediatric dietitians' group and parents and caregivers of children under the age of 5 years old. 01/06/08. Revised July 2010.

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For more information you can look at the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for healthy infants and toddlers (aged 0-2years) at <http://www.moh.govt.nz>

(1) Szymlek- Gay EA, Ferguson EL, Heath A-LM, Gray AR, Gibson RS (2009). Food-based strategies improve iron status in toddlers: a randomized controlled trial.

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**Iron deficiency anaemia cannot be treated by diet alone and requires prescribed iron supplements. If you are concerned about your toddler please visit your doctor.**

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