

## Department of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

# Inflammatory bowel disease and iron deficiency

Children and young people are at risk of iron deficiency due to:

- The inflammatory bowel disease itself
- Poor appetite and poor nutritional intake
- Reduced absorption of iron from food

Low iron levels can lead to anaemia, a condition in which the concentration of red blood cells reduces in the body. Anaemia can cause tiredness, shortness of breath and poor appetite.

You can help to maintain your iron levels by ensuring you include a number of good sources of iron in your diet every day.

Your daily iron requirements change as you grow:

6 months to one year	7.8mg
1-3 years	6.7mg
4-6 years	6.1mg
7-10 years	8.9mg
11-18 years boys	11.2mg
11-18 years girls	14.5mg

## Meat and meat products

Meat and meat products are the best sources of iron. This is called haem iron and is the easiest type of iron for your body to absorb. You should aim to have red meat two to three times per week.

Iron content of meat and fish (per 100g/3½oz serving):

Beef	2.8 mg
Lamb	2.1 mg
Pork	1.3 mg
Chicken	0.6 mg
Liver	10.0 mg
Kidney	9.0 mg
Liver pate (40g)	2.8 mg
Pilchards	2.7 mg
Sardines	4.6 mg

**Other sources of iron**

The other sources of iron are called non-haem and are from vegetable sources. These are less easy for your body to absorb.

**Fortified breakfast cereals (average serving)**

Bran Flakes	3.4
Cornflakes	2.4
Rice Krispies	2.4
Weetabix	2.3
Ready Brek	3.6
Cereal bars (average)	2.5

**Beans and pulses (100g/ 3½oz serving)**

Baked, broad and Butter beans	1.5
Kidney beans	2.0
Red lentils (boiled weight)	2.4
Green and brown lentils (boiled)	3.5
Chickpeas	1.5
Hummous	1.9
Peas	1.6

**Fruit and vegetables (100g/ 3½oz serving)**

Broccoli	1.0
Curly kale	2.0
Spinach	1.7
Spring greens	1.4
Canned blackcurrants in juice	5.2
Canned cherries in syrup	2.9
Canned prunes in juice	2.2
Canned raspberries in syrup	1.7
Stewed blackcurrants & redcurrants	1.0

**Dried fruit (ready to eat) (100g/ 3½oz serving)**

Apricots	3.4
Prunes	2.6
Dates	1.1
Figs	3.9
Mixed fruit	2.2

**Others**

Treacle -30g/1oz	2.8
Plain chocolate – 50g/ 1½oz	1.2
Liquorice allsorts	4.0
Twiglets	1.5
Tofu	3.5

**Foods that help iron absorption**

If you are having a non-haem source of iron then having a source of vitamin C can help absorption. Vitamin C is most commonly found in fruit, potatoes and green leafy vegetables. For example, you could have a glass of orange juice with your fortified breakfast cereal.

## **Foods that reduce iron absorption**

Tea contains a high level of tannin which can reduce absorption of non-haem iron. It is best to avoid drinking tea with your meals that have these sources of iron in them.

## **Should I have iron supplements?**

We monitor your iron levels regularly and will let you know if they are low. Iron supplements can be prescribed if needed but can cause stomach aches at higher doses. Iron supplements are sometimes given at low doses two to three times a week.

If they do not improve the anaemia or cause side-effects, children sometimes require an intravenous infusion to restore iron levels more quickly.

If you do not think you are managing to meet your iron requirements speak to your doctor, nurse or dietitian.



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### Cantonese

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### Turkish

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### Urdu

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### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পেতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

## Document history

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