

## Iron Imbalance in Children

Iron is an essential element for blood production. About 70 percent of your body's iron is found in the red blood cells of your blood called hemoglobin and in muscle cells called myoglobin. Hemoglobin is essential for transferring oxygen in your blood from the lungs to the tissues. Myoglobin, in muscle cells, accepts, stores, transports and releases oxygen.

Listed are foods that can help increase iron levels in the blood.

### Dietary Heme Iron Sources (Absorbed by the body at a higher rate)

- Meats: Beef, pork, and lamb; especially organ meat such as liver
- Fish: Sardines, anchovies, and especially shellfish such as clams, mussels, oysters, and scallops
- Poultry: Chicken, turkey, and duck; especially dark meat and organ meats such as liver and giblets
- Egg Yolks (also a source of nonheme iron)

### Dietary Nonheme Iron Sources

- Dark leafy greens: Broccoli, spinach, kale, turnip greens, and collard greens
- Legumes: Lentils, lima beans, pinto beans, soy-beans, white beans, chickpeas, and black-eyed peas
- Tofu (preferably without added sodium)
- Artichokes
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes
- Tomato paste and sun-dried tomatoes
- Dried fruits: Prunes, raisins, and apricots
- Seeds: Squash, pumpkin, sesame, and sunflower
- Nuts: Cashews, pine nuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, and almonds
- Blackstrap molasses
- Iron-fortified dry and instant cooked cereals
- Iron-enriched pastas, grains, and rice