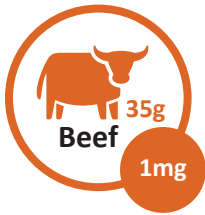


Boosting iron intake for toddlers and children

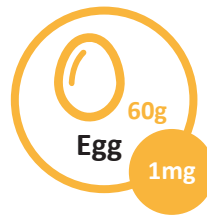
Iron plays an important role in brain development, growth and fighting infections.

The best sources of iron are in foods where the iron is easily absorbed:



Providing red meat twice a week at lunch or dinner is recommended to meet your child's iron and zinc needs. These can be foods like meatballs, sausages or pulled beef. The portions of red meat do not need to be large; they just need to be provided regularly for the iron to be absorbed.

Other foods that include iron but the iron is less easily absorbed:



Making the most of iron



Vitamin C helps iron absorption

Iron from food is better absorbed if eaten with a food containing vitamin C. Foods high in vitamin C include oranges, lemons, limes, kiwifruits, pineapples, berries, tomatoes, capsicums, parsley, broccoli and many more.

Dairy can decrease iron absorption

Dairy can interfere with the absorption of iron and decrease your child's appetite. Try not to have dairy at a meal with red meat (e.g. do not serve milk with dinner).

For the best improvements in your child's iron levels, do not give them any dairy one hour before or after iron supplementation.



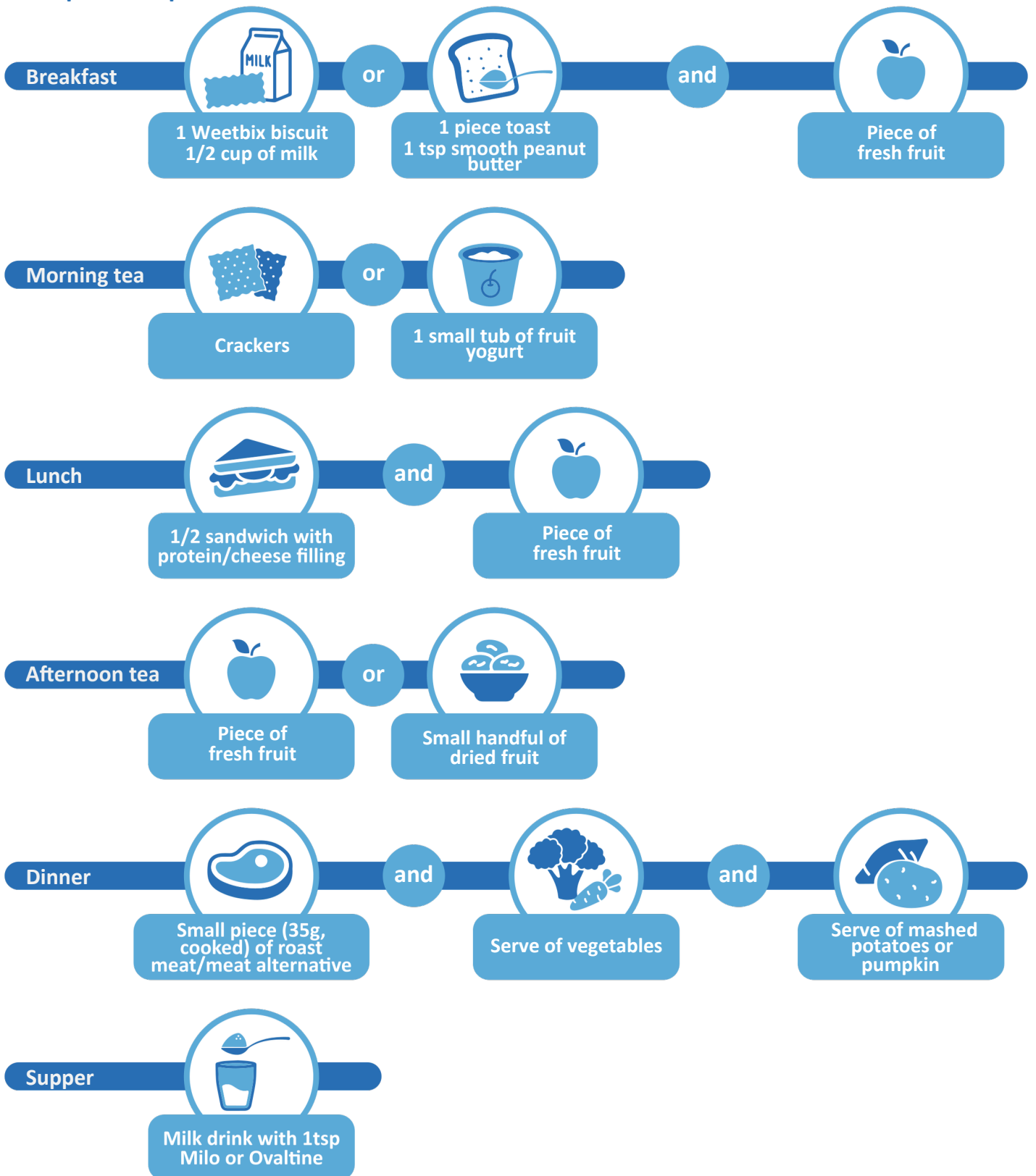
Iron supplementation

Your child's iron levels won't come up from a deficient level with diet alone — iron supplementation is very important. Once your child has been treated with iron supplements, their levels will stay up if you provide lots of iron rich foods, provide vitamin C alongside to help with iron absorption, and avoid serving dairy at meals with red meat.

Consult an Accredited Practising Dietician (APF) if you are still concerned about your child's iron intake.



Example meal plan



Things I can do to increase my child's iron intake

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____