Babies:

- **From birth**: **Breastfeed** your baby. Breast milk is best! If you give your baby formula, always use **formula with iron**. Wait until about one year to give your baby cow's milk.
- **At 4 to 6 months:** Start **baby cereal with iron** and mashed fruits and vegetables. Keep feeding your baby the baby cereal at least until one year old. You can mix it with other cereals, fruits, or juices if your baby gets tired of it. You can even make cookies with baby cereal.
- **At 7 to 8 months:** Start baby **meats**, mashed beans, or tofu. If you use baby meats, buy the plain meats instead of meats mixed with vegetables, rice or noodles. You can also cook ground meat and mash it for your baby. Give your baby a **vitamin C fruit, vegetable, or fruit juice** at least once a day. See the list in this pamphlet for some ideas.

Children and adults:

- **Eat high iron foods** every day. Look at the list in this pamphlet for some ideas. WIC cereals are great snacks for your children.
- **Eat high vitamin C foods** when you eat high iron foods. Vitamin C helps your body use iron. Check the list in this pamphlet.
- **Drink milk, juice, or water** with meals. Coffee and tea can make you take in less iron from the food you eat. If you drink coffee or tea, drink them between meals.

If you are pregnant, be sure to take your **prenatal vitamins**. They have extra iron. If you have low iron, ask your doctor about taking **iron pills**.

If your baby or child has low iron, their doctor might give you **iron drops** for them. Be careful to give the right amount of iron drops, and not too much.

Sample Menu

A full day of high iron foods for you or your child

Breakfast	WIC cereal with fruit and milk orange juice toast
Snack	crackers with peanut butter fruit
Lunch	soft tacos with beans and meat lettuce tomatoes milk
Snack	tuna sandwich WIC juice
Dinner	chicken rice broccoli fruit milk

Warning: Keep all iron pills and iron drops away from children. Too much iron from pills or drops can poison your child. Just 10 iron pills can kill a small child.

Washington State Department of Health
DOH Pub 961-194 8/2004

Adapted from California Department of Health, WIC Supplemental Nutrition Branch. Printed by Washington State Department of Health WIC Program. WIC is an equal opportunity program. For persons with disabilities this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

Iron for Strong Blood

This is my goal: _____

_____

_____

You and Your Family Need Iron

Why do I need iron?

You need iron to keep your blood strong. If your blood is low in iron, you have anemia. Anemia can make you or your child:

- look pale, feel tired and weak, act cranky.
- eat poorly.
- not grow well.
- get sick more easily, get infections and headaches.
- have trouble learning, and do poorly in school or work.

If you are pregnant, your baby could be born too soon or too small.

How can I get enough iron for myself and my family?

Iron is a mineral found in some foods. Eating foods that are high in iron can help keep you and your family healthy and feeling good.

Milk products are low in iron!

All dairy products like milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream are very low in iron. They are good foods, because they have calcium for bones and teeth. But *too much* milk could make your child anemic. The milk fills your child up and keeps him/her from getting enough iron foods. What to do:

- Start teaching your baby to use a cup at around 6 months. Then **stop giving your baby a bottle** at around one year. Many children who use a bottle after one year drink too much milk. They are not hungry at mealtime.
- After your child's first birthday, 4 to 6 small servings of milk or milk products a day is enough. No more than 24 ounces (710 milliliters) of milk per day.

Iron Foods

Choose these foods for lots of iron:

Very good

- beef, pork
- beef or chicken liver
- cooked beans (pinto, garbanzo, kidney, lima, black, lentils)

- beans cooked with low-fat meat
- cooked oysters
- all WIC cereals
- other cereals with added iron (check the label)

- baby cereals with iron

Good

- chicken, turkey
- fish, canned tuna, shrimp, clams

- tofu
- corn or flour tortillas, enriched (check the label)
- rice or pasta, enriched (check the label)
- bread, enriched (check the label)

- leafy greens (spinach, chard, collards, parsley, cilantro)
- prune juice, dried fruit

Some babies may be allergic to pork, seafood, tofu, or corn.

Iron Tips

Eat vitamin C foods with iron foods:

Vitamin C helps your body use iron. Eat a vitamin C food when you eat iron foods, or cook them together. Examples:

- Drink a glass of orange juice with your breakfast cereal
- Cook your beans with some tomatoes
- Have some salsa on your taco
- Give your baby some juice or fruit with his/her cereal

Some **high vitamin C foods** are:

- Vegetables — potato, tomato, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, bell pepper
- Fruits — orange, cantaloupe, mango, papaya, grapefruit, strawberry
- Juices — orange, grapefruit, tomato, lemon, lime and all WIC juices

Some babies may be allergic to tomatoes, oranges, grapefruit, or strawberries.

More tips...

- **Add a little bit of meat to other foods.** This helps your body use the iron in the other foods. Small amounts of meat are good for your health. Try to eat low-fat meats.
- **Cook foods in cast iron** skillets, pots, or pans (heavy black ones). Cooking foods in cast iron adds iron to the food.
- **Soak dry beans** for several hours in cold water before you cook them. **Pour off the water** and use new water to cook the beans. Then, your body will take in more iron from the beans.

Washington State Department of Health

Dear Colleague,

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is pleased to provide camera-ready art for printing this educational material. To ensure that the original quality of the piece is maintained, please read and follow the instructions below and the specifications included for professional printing.

- **Use the latest version**. DOH materials are developed using the most current information available, are checked for clinical accuracy, and are field tested with the intended audience to ensure they are clear and readable. DOH programs make periodic revisions to educational materials, so please check this web site to be sure you have the latest version. DOH assumes no responsibility for the use of this material or for any errors or omissions.

- **Do not alter**. We are providing this artwork with the understanding that it will be printed without alterations and copies will be free to the public. Do not edit the text or use illustrations or photographs for other purposes without first contacting us. Please do not alter or remove the DOH logo, publication number or revision date. If you want to use a part of this publication for other purposes, contact the Office of Health Promotion first.

- **For quality reproduction**: Low resolution PDF files are intended for black and white or color desktop printers. They work best if you are making only one or two copies. High resolution PDF files are intended for reproducing large quantities and are set up for use by professional offset print shops. The high resolution files also include detailed printing specifications. Please match them as closely as possible and insist on the best possible quality for all reproductions.

If you have questions, contact:
Office of Health Promotion
P.O. Box 47833 Olympia, WA 98504-7833
(360) 236-3736

Sincerely,
Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team

PRINTING SPECIFICATIONS

Title:	**Iron for Strong Blood**
Size:	16.5 x 9
Paper stock:	60# text Sterling gloss white
Ink color:	4-color process
Special instructions:	Prints 2 sides. Cover bleeds. Finished job folds to 5.5 x 9
DOH Pub #:	961-194