

## Food

➤ The best sources of iron are **red meat** such as beef, minced beef, lamb, pork and liver. Sardines are also a rich source of iron. These foods should be offered regularly, for example in dishes such as shepherd's pie, lasagne or spaghetti bolognaise.



## Other sources of Iron

Other sources of iron include green leafy vegetables, eggs, beans, and fortified breakfast cereals. Iron from meat is used more efficiently by the body than iron from other foods.



➤ Vitamin C sources include – oranges, mandarins, kiwi fruit, potatoes, tomatoes, strawberries, broccoli and peppers.

➤ **Do not** give your child tea to drink for the first five years of life as it will reduce the amount of iron the body can use.

## 2) Medication

After a blood test your child may be prescribed either **Fer-In-Sol®** or **Galfer®** Syrup. Please read instructions carefully, do not exceed dosage or duration of treatment.

Constipation can be a problem while your child is on this medication. Fresh fruit, vegetables and high fibre breads and cereals are good foods to help avoid constipation. Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids, like fruit juices, while on iron medication.

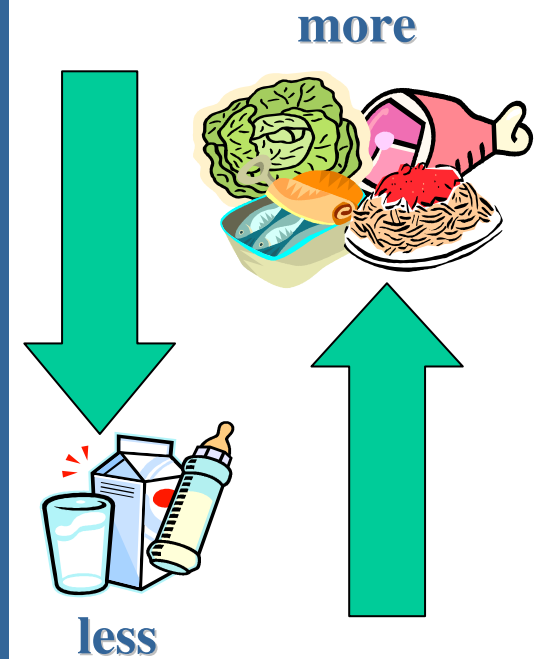
**A follow-up blood test is advised after three months of medication and diet management.**



Developed by the staff of the Children's Emergency Department, The National Children's Hospital, Tallaght, Dublin 24. (January 2009)

# Parents Information Leaflet

## Iron Deficiency Anaemia



**THE ADELAIDE & MEATH  
HOSPITAL, DUBLIN**  
INCORPORATING THE NATIONAL CHILDRENS  
HOSPITAL



## WHAT IS IRON DEFICIENCY ANAEMIA

Iron deficiency is the most common nutritional deficiency of childhood.

Anaemia means reduced number or quality of red cells in the blood. The most common cause in Ireland is lack of iron **in the diet**.

### How does it occur?

Iron deficiency can occur in three ways – not enough **iron** in the diet, reduced absorption of iron by the body, or too much iron lost from the body (eg. bleeding).



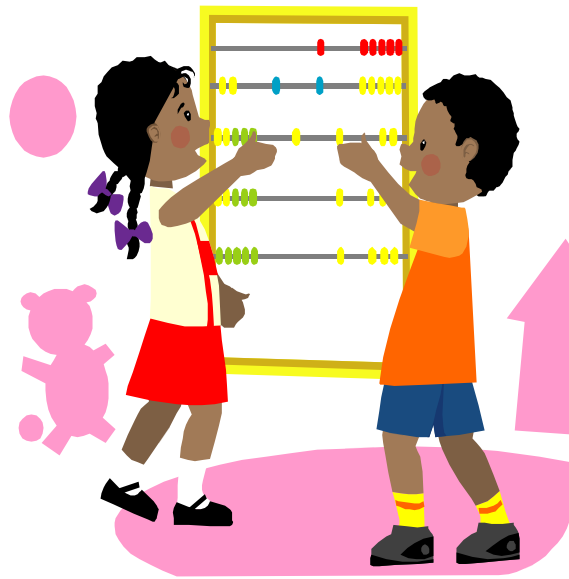
**Babies** are born with stores of iron but this iron only lasts for about 6 months. Therefore from 6 months onwards the diet must provide sufficient iron for healthy growth and development and the prevention of iron deficiency anaemia .

## SIGNS OF IRON DEFICIENCY

Iron deficiency develops slowly and children rarely become acutely unwell. Your child may show changes in mood and behaviour. Your child may become pale and weak, eat less and tire easily.

Your child may not gain weight and have frequent infections (chest or kidney infections).

A blood test called an FBC can confirm this diagnosis.



## TREATMENT

Iron is treated by dietary management and /or giving the child medication.

### 1) Diet

Iron is a very important part of your child's diet as it is essential for normal growth and development. Even a short term lack of iron, can lead to iron deficiency anaemia.

➤ Introduce iron rich foods in to the weaning diet from six months on e.g. red meat well cooked eggs, beans, lentils, fortified breakfast cereals

### Milk

➤ Your child should not begin to take cow's milk as a drink until he/she is over 1 year of age.

➤ From 1 year of age your child needs **no more than** 1pint (approx 600mls or 18oz) of cow's milk per day. Drinking more than this can reduce your child's appetite and lead to iron deficiency anaemia.