

Iron makes our bodies strong

FACT

Iron makes our bodies strong

- It strengthens the blood.
- It builds muscles and brain.
- It helps the body to work properly.

A lack of iron in the diet causes anaemia, which makes people tired and breathless.

A well-balanced diet with a variety of foods provides enough iron

Iron is found in some animal foods:

- liver, blood and other offal
- flesh of animals, birds and fish, especially red meat
- eggs

Iron from animal foods can be easily used by the body.

Iron is also found in some plant foods:

- whole grain cereals
(e.g. maize, millet, sorghum, wheat)
- legumes
(e.g. beans, peas, lentils)
- dark green leafy vegetables
(e.g. spinach, amaranthus, pumpkin leaves, kale)

Iron from plant foods can be better used by the body if it is eaten with animal foods **or** fruits.

Good fruits to eat with iron-rich plant foods are orange, mango, guava, pawpaw and lemon.

Women need more iron

Women and older girls should have more iron-rich foods than men because they lose iron during menstruation.

During pregnancy, anaemia can cause problems during delivery and hinders the healthy development of the child. For this reason, pregnant women are often advised to take iron tablets.

For babies under 6 months the best source of iron is breast milk.

ACT

- ❖ Eat a variety of foods every day, including iron-rich foods.
- ❖ Eat fruits with or after your meals to make better use of the iron in the food.
- ❖ Do not drink tea or coffee until 1 or 2 hours after a meal because it reduces the use of iron in the body.
- ❖ Make sure that the women and older girls in your household eat plenty of iron-rich foods.
- ❖ Make sure to give iron-rich foods to children 6 months and older.
- ❖ If you are pregnant, get advice from local health care centres to see if you need iron tablets.