

# Good food for strong blood



## This resource has been developed for use with families of children that have weak blood (anaemia)

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Department of Health  
 Strategy Policy and Planning  
 PO Box 40596, Casuarina, NT 0811  
 (08) 8985 8015

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[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

(pages 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,12, 13, 14 and 15).

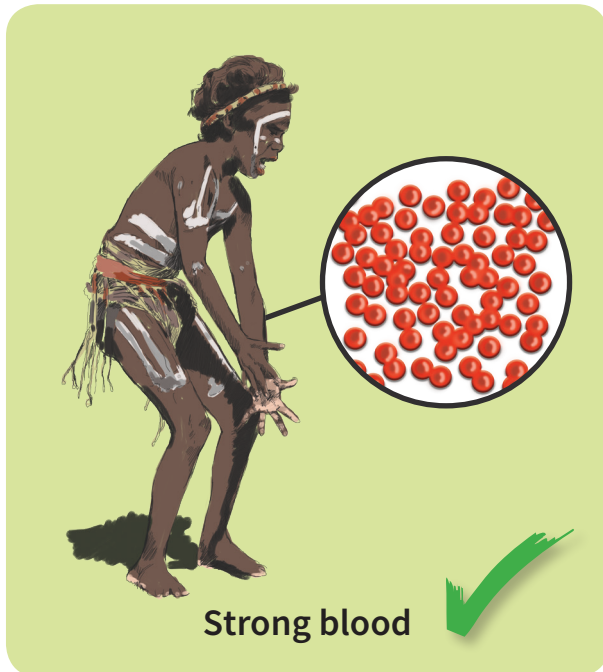
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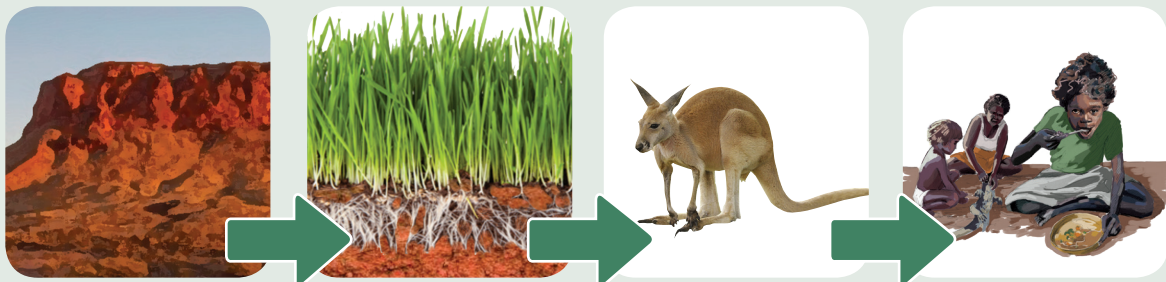
# What is weak blood (anaemia)?

Weak blood is when there's not enough healthy red blood cells in the body to carry the oxygen we need. Weak blood is also called anaemia. It is often caused by a lack of iron in the blood.



**What is iron?** Foods contain many different things needed to be healthy. One of these is iron, it is too small to see in the food we eat or in our blood.

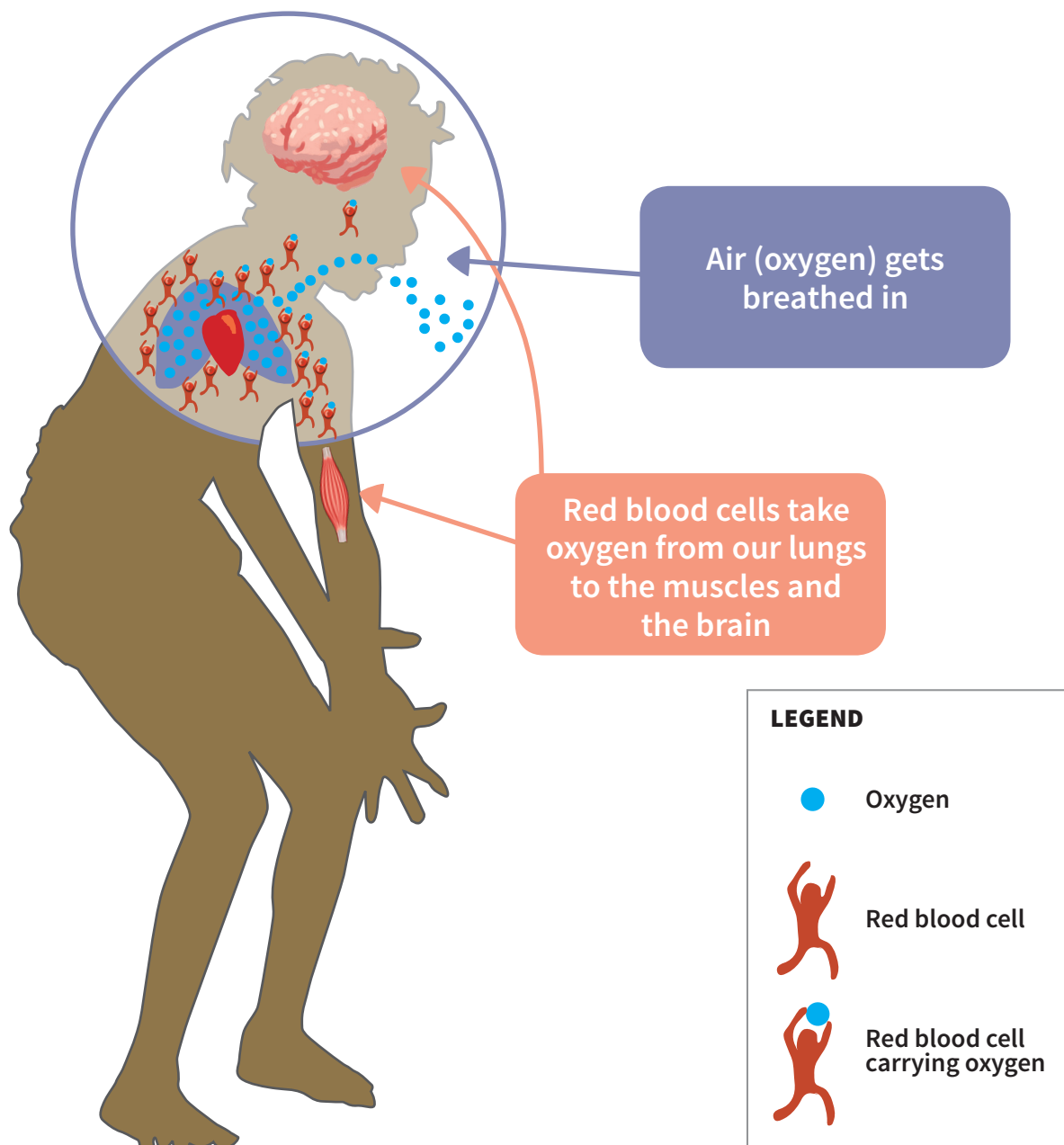
## Where does iron come from?



# What does iron do in the body?

Iron is needed to make healthy red blood cells. These red blood cells carry oxygen (from the air we breathe) around the body.

Oxygen is needed for our brain, muscles and organs to work and grow. Without enough iron, the body does not get the oxygen it needs to work properly.





**This child has strong blood.**

They have enough iron to take oxygen around their body. Their brain, muscles and organs work well.



**This child has weak blood.**

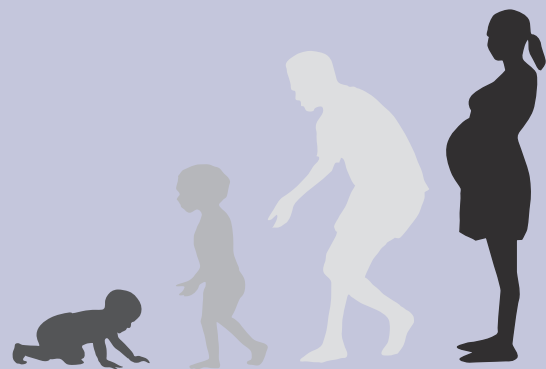
They do not have enough iron to take oxygen around their body. Their brain, muscles and organs cannot work properly.

**Who needs iron?**

Everyone needs to eat foods high in iron every day!

Iron is extra important for babies and children as their brain and bodies are growing quickly.

Pregnant women also need more iron for their growing baby.



Babies need more iron than fully grown men. Pregnant ladies need the most iron.

**Why?**

Babies and children need iron to grow.



# Why do we want strong blood?

Children with strong blood:



Stay healthy more often



Grow up strong



Have more energy



Learn well at school



Feel good and are happier



Have brains that work better

# Why do we worry about weak blood?

Children with weak blood:



Have brains that grow more slowly



Might not grow well



Are not as hungry



Feel more tired



Get sick more often



Get out of breath easily (short wind)



Can feel unhappy or angry

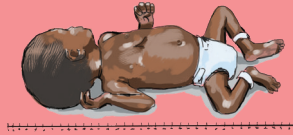


Have problems thinking and learning

# Why do some children get weak blood?



If mum has weak blood when she is pregnant



Baby is born too early or too small



If not started on solid foods at around 6 month



Drinking cow's milk before one year



If sugary drinks are given to babies and children



Too much junk food



Not enough food



Drinking tea and coffee



Being sick a lot



Getting parasites or infections like worms or scabies

# How can I keep my child's blood strong?



## Make sure that mum is in good health when pregnant

- ✓ Has strong blood
- ✓ Regular check-ups
- ✓ No smoking or alcohol
- ✓ Good nutrition (including lots of strong blood foods)



Breastmilk is all babies need until around 6 months



Give strong blood foods as first foods at around 6 months



Provide enough strong blood foods



Have iron 'helper foods' high in vitamin C



No sugary drinks or junk food



No tea or coffee for babies or children



Regular check-ups at the health centre

# Foods for strong blood

Eating strong blood foods (high in iron) everyday will help keep children's blood strong

## Best iron foods

### Meats and offal



### Bush meats



### Shellfish



### Chicken, eggs and fish



### Iron rich cereals, bread, damper that is high in iron



### Beans



### Canned meals with meat and vegetables



## Iron helpers

These foods are high in vitamin C which helps iron to get into the blood. Have some of these with good iron foods.

### Some vegetables



### Some fruits



### Bush berries, fruit, vegetables



## Iron stoppers

Some drinks stop iron getting into the blood. Do not give these drinks to babies or children.



## Best drinks for babies from 6 months



## Best drinks for children from 12 months



# Strong blood foods and meal ideas

## 6-7 months old babies need:

- Foods that are soft, smooth and thick
- Every meal to have a strong blood food



Any of these can be used to help make the baby's food smooth so it is easy to eat



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Baby cereal with added iron



Smooth chicken and green vegetables



Smooth spaghetti bolognese

## Other strong blood foods for babies:



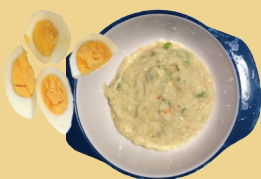
Smooth meat and lentil soup



Smooth baked beans (no added salt)



Smooth fish, potato and green vegetables



Smooth eggs



Baby food with meat in it



Soft wheat biscuits (added-iron) \*with breast milk



Smooth tuna casserole

## 7-9 month old babies need:

- Soft lumpy foods
- 5 small meals per day



Food should be mashed into soft lumps so it's easier for babies to eat



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Baby cereal with added iron



Scrambled egg with grated cheese



Baked beans on high iron toast with banana



High iron toast and peanut butter



Savoury mince

## Other strong blood foods for babies



Mashed beef with minced pasta



Lentil stew



Baked beans (no added salt) mashed up



Shepherd's pie



Cooked fish pieces



Tuna bake



Bush turkey stew



Crab pasta



Minced chicken and vegetable casserole

## At around 9-12 months:

- Children are ready for chopped and finger foods
- Offer 5 small meals per day



Boiled egg and toast



High iron toast and peanut butter



Soft cooked meat and vegetable stew with fruit



Yoghurt



Tin tuna, pasta and vegetables

## Other strong blood foods for babies



Kangaroo, tomato and potato cut into chunks



Meat pattie with vegetables



Bolognese with mince, vegetables and pasta



Omelette with tomatoes



Pork, rice and cooked vegetables



Fish and bean stew



Small pieces of chicken

## From around 12 months old:

- Children can eat healthy food with the family
- Offer 3 main meals with 1-2 snacks per day
- Children want to be like you – if you eat healthy strong blood foods they will copy



Weetbix with milk



Tuna on wholegrain crackers



Egg and lettuce sandwich



Fruit



Beef and vegetable casserole

## Other strong blood foods for babies



Beef and tomato sandwich with wholemeal bread



Meat and chickpea soup



Buffalo stir-fry with vegetables



potato with baked beans



Four bean mix and frozen vegetable mix



Broccoli, mince and rice



Fish and salad wrap



Meatballs

# Strong blood foods if there are money worries

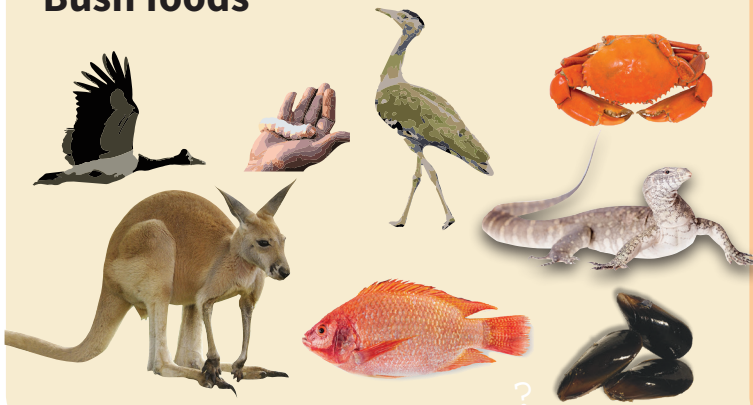
## Foods from the shop



## Iron helper foods



## Bush foods



## Iron helper foods



## Ways to make stronger iron meals when having money worries

Braised steak and vegetables with iron-rich baby cereal



Vegetable soup with kangaroo



Noodles with peas and tuna



# Other ways to keep blood strong

Keep children, houses and pets clean to keep children healthy.



Clean house



Wash face and nose



Wash hands before touching food



Rubbish in the bin



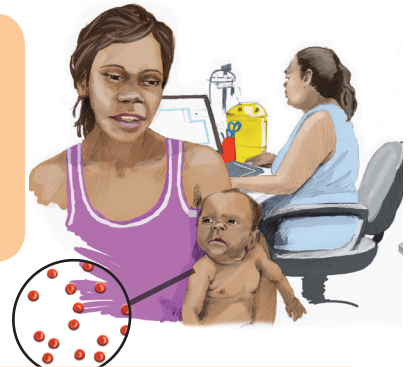
Keep pets clean and put pets outside

Visit the health centre



# How do we treat weak blood?

Your child should have a blood check (for anaemia) at the health centre every 6 months



## WEAK BLOOD?

If your child's blood is weak, you and the health centre can work together to make your child's blood strong.

### Decide what is better for you and your family.

Your child can drink medicine. Parents need to make sure this medicine is taken every day for 3 months

OR

Your child will need to have some iron needles (usually 3-4 needles)

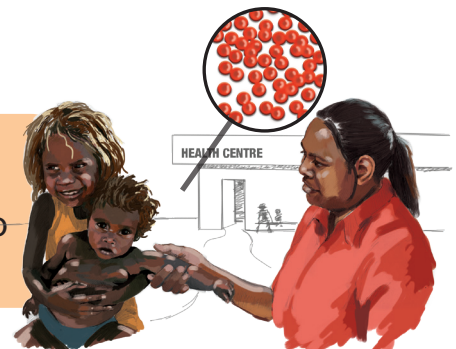


Remember to give your child strong blood foods every day.



## THEN

Bring your child back to the health centre after 6 weeks to check their blood is strong



# Where can I get help?



**Family and friends**



**Money management services  
e.g. Centrelink**



**Schools**



**Childcare or Families as  
First Teachers (FaFT)**



**Health centre**

**Your ideas:**

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# Our strong blood plan

## What am I going to do?

**Strong iron foods** – For example have a strong iron food at each meal

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**Good hygiene** – For example clean children, clean house and clean pets

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**Medical treatment** – For example take iron medication

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**Who is going to help?** – For example family, clinic

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Good food  
for strong blood