

Boosting Iron and Calcium for Kids

The Importance of Iron & Calcium

Iron and calcium are important nutrients that support developing brains and strong bones.

Iron is an important dietary mineral for a number of key functions in the body like transporting oxygen, the release of energy and red blood cell production.

Calcium also plays a crucial role in the healthy functioning of nerves and muscle tissue.



Many young children still struggle to get enough iron and calcium in their diet¹

Which foods contribute to iron and calcium in children's diets?

Kids need a variety of foods containing iron and calcium to help them meet their daily requirements. According to the latest national dietary intake survey, the following foods contribute to iron in Australian children's diets².

LARGEST CONTRIBUTORS

- Breakfast cereals
- Bread and rolls
- Dishes containing cereal flours e.g. pasta
- Red meat and meat dishes
- Chicken and chicken dishes

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

- Egg and egg dishes
- Nuts and nut products
- Leaf and stalk vegetables e.g. spinach
- Dairy and yoghurt
- Fruits and dried fruits

DID YOU KNOW?

Eating foods containing Vitamin C such as fruits and vegetables together with iron-containing foods helps increase iron absorption³.



Milk and milk products, including cheese and yoghurt, contribute to the majority of calcium in young children's diets^{1,2}. It is not surprising that **dairy milk remains the largest single contributor to calcium intakes**^{1,2}.

Starting the day with a balanced breakfast provides children with a good opportunity to meet their daily nutrient requirements, especially for nutrients like iron and calcium.



What is a balanced breakfast?

To maximise the nutritional opportunity breakfast brings, **there should be 3 components** to the breakfast meal:

1 grain serve + 1 dairy serve + 1 fruit or protein serve

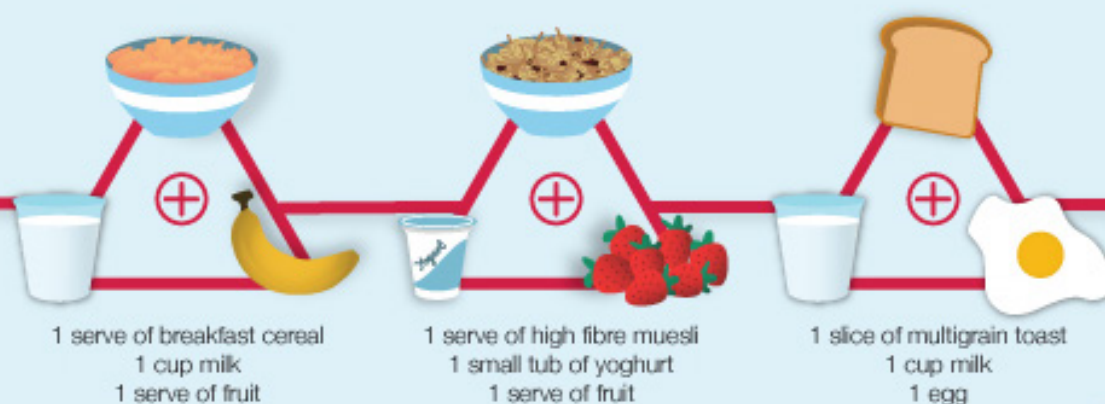
Dairy
Serve

Fruit or
Protein
Serve



Grain
Serve

Although breakfast cereal and milk are great for iron and calcium, there are many combinations that can make breakfast varied and appealing. **Some suggestions for a balanced breakfast are:**



It may surprise you to learn that, at breakfast, children who choose cereal get about **twice the iron and calcium** compared to those who don't¹.

In fact, breakfast cereal is the largest contributor of iron in Australian children's diets^{1,2}

A bowl of cereal and a glass of milk can provide up to

30%

of young kids' daily iron and calcium needs*.

Children who choose cereal for breakfast are **more likely to meet their nutrient requirements for the day**³. So start the day with a healthy breakfast to make sure your kids get that extra nutritional boost.

References:

1. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. 2007 Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey 2012. www.health.gov.au
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results - Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12 4364.0.55.007, Canberra 2014.
3. Rossander L, Hallberg L, Björn-Rasmussen E. Absorption of iron from breakfast meals. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 1979; 32:2484-2489
4. Flinders University. Analysis of the 2007 Australian National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey. Commissioned by Kellogg Australia New Zealand, 2012

* NHMRC Nutrient Reference Values 2005 for 4-11 years. A serve of Kellogg cereal and 250mL of milk typically has 3mg of iron and 300mg of calcium