

Unlock Every Child's Potential With Iron



Achieve More Success in Your Program by Reducing Iron Deficiency and Anemia

Iron deficiency and resulting anemia in young children is a problem of great magnitude. Almost half of all young children around the world are anemic. This puts their health, development, education, and their futures at risk. Early child development (ECD) programs are accelerating and making excellent progress in aiding child development but one key element has yet to be embraced—reducing iron deficiency and anemia.

ECD Bulletin on Iron Deficiency — Your Link to Tools and Resources

In 1999, a group of organizations led by The Micronutrient Initiative began a concerted effort to focus attention on the long ignored problem of iron deficiency and anemia. Research showed there was a lack of information about solutions to the problem and where to turn for technical assistance.

During the last two years, efforts have been focused on developing informational materials, devising a communications plan, and forming networks of people and programs that can provide assistance. These resources are now available to ECD programs to aid your effort to improve child health, education, and development.

This bulletin will appear quarterly, highlighting new resources, program ideas, and links to funding and assistance. Please contact The Manoff Group if there are specific questions or topics you would like to see addressed.



What is Iron ?

Iron is a vital ingredient in red blood cells that helps oxygen to be carried to all parts of the body. Oxygen is needed for us to function effectively during the activities of daily life. This makes iron essential to our well-being— allowing us to learn, grow, and be healthy.

Iron deficiency = a low level of iron in the blood; there may be no visible symptoms but health and development are compromised.

Anemia = very low level of iron in the blood; symptoms such as extreme fatigue, pale palms and tongue are easily detectable. Health and development are severely effected.

Did you know?

- A study has shown that anemic infants on reaching school age, even if no longer anemic, average 9 points lower in IQ testing than their counterparts. *Human Biology, 1983*
- Diarrhea, respiratory, and other infections are more frequent and severe in children with iron deficiency anemia. *Major Issues in the Control of Iron Deficiency, MI, UNICEF, 1998.*

Advocacy Publications Available:

Iron Improves Life

Iron deficiency is a critical public health problem affecting over 70% of people worldwide. The costs of iron deficiency to society and the consequences for families and communities are significant. An important first step in defeating iron deficiency is to raise awareness about the problem and what can be done. This booklet provides an overview of iron deficiency and detailed actions to prevent and treat iron deficiency.

The booklet includes a number of key messages, with supporting information for each message:

- Iron deficiency is a critical public health problem.
- Iron is important for everyone particularly at certain stages of life.
- Reducing iron deficiency builds a stronger nation and increases returns on investments.
- Iron helps children grow stronger and smarter.

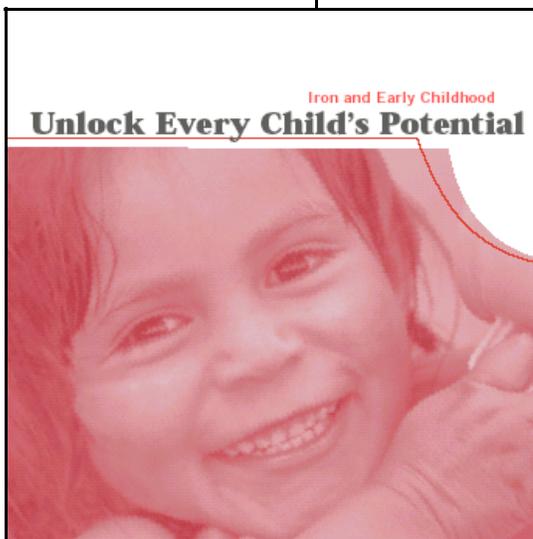
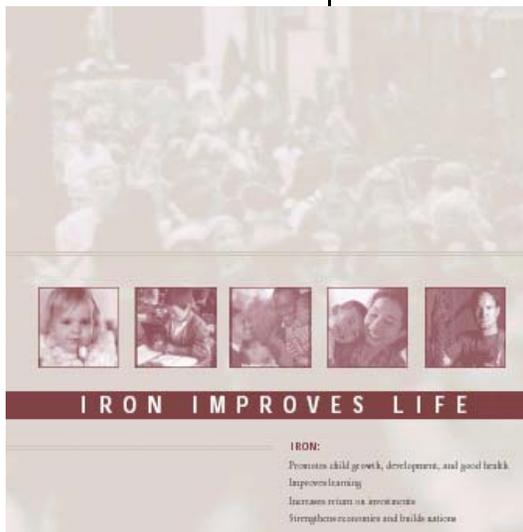
Actions to prevent and treat iron deficiency are described along with specific country examples. The booklet also contains two fact sheets- one summarizes the impact of treating iron deficiency and the other describes practical, cost-effective actions. Additional sources of information on iron deficiency are provided.

Unlock Every Child's Potential: Iron and Early Childhood

Iron deficiency affects almost 50% of all young children. This booklet discusses how to prevent and reduce iron deficiency anemia in ECD programs. The consequences of iron deficiency for young children and reasons for adding iron to ECD programs are explained. Actions to reduce iron deficiency can be added to ECD programs efficiently and cost-effectively. Experience shows that these actions directly benefit the children and improve the overall effectiveness of the ECD program. Information is provided on what early childhood development programs can do including:

- Provide iron supplements to children.
- Provide meals and snacks that are iron-rich.
- Encourage children to eat foods that enhance the absorption of iron.
- Provide information to parents and caregivers about iron deficiency.
- Support iron fortification of foods in the community.
- Encourage public health treatment and prevention programs if hookworm, malaria or diarrhea are prevalent in the community.

Two fact sheets are included on how ECD programs can reduce iron deficiency and the impact of preventing and treating iron deficiency. Both of these can be shared with parents and caregivers. Resources for additional information are provided.





Organizations that can help:

The Micronutrient Initiative

P.O. Box 56127
250 Albert Street
Ottawa, Canada K1R 7Z1
www.micronutrient.org

tel: 613-782-6800

The Micronutrient Initiative (MI) is an international center working to eliminate micronutrient malnutrition. MI focuses on food fortification; supplementation; advocacy and information; and research and development. MI supports national programs that expand the fortification of staple foods and provide dietary supplementation.

The Iron Deficiency Program Advisory Service (IDPAS)

International Nutrition Foundation
Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy
126 Curtis Street
Medford, MA 02155 USA
www.micronutrient.org/idpas

tel: 617-627-2291

**Iron Deficiency Project
Advisory Service (IDPAS)**
Please visit the IDPAS
website for more
information —
[www.micronutrient.org/
IDPAS](http://www.micronutrient.org/IDPAS)

IDPAS is a web-based resource focusing on preventing and controlling iron deficiency anemia. Publications and links are provided on a range of iron deficiency topics including food fortification, supplementation, education for dietary change and public health interventions to improve iron nutrition and prevent anemia. The section on advocacy and communications includes: IEC resources, powerpoint presentations and videotapes. IDPAS technical staff will respond to questions. Publications are available at no charge.

The Manoff Group

2001 S Street, NW, #400
Washington D.C. 20009 USA
www.manoffgroup.com

tel: 202-265-7469

The Manoff Group provides assistance in effective behavior-centered programming for health and nutrition projects. For over 30 years, The Manoff Group has brought innovations in qualitative research methods, communication strategies, social marketing, and the creation of training materials to health and nutrition programs around the world. Please contact us to receive this newsletter and other publications on reducing iron deficiency.

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333 USA
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/anemiron.htm

tel: 404-639-3534

The CDC is involved in anemia surveys around the world, provides training and monitoring of laboratory practices, and has informational and program planning resources that are helpful for programs working to reduce iron deficiency.

Actions Achieve Results:

Increase consumption of iron-rich foods

Encourage *exclusive breastfeeding* by mothers for children 0-6 months old. Breast milk contains easily absorbable iron and helps build up a child's *iron stores*.

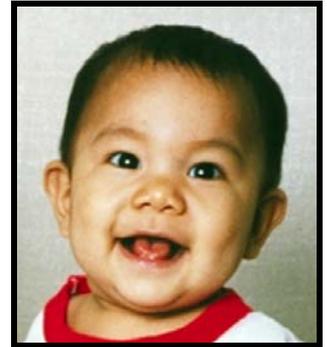
Feed children iron-rich foods everyday :

- lentils, soybeans
- chicken
- fish
- dried, cooked fruits

Do not serve tea or coffee to children. These block the absorption of iron from the food they eat.

Provide supplemental iron

If your program serves food to children, try to give items fortified with iron.



c/o The Manoff Group
2001 "S" Street, NW #400
Washington, D.C. 20009
USA