



# Healthy Beginnings

February



## Nutrition: Eat Iron Rich Foods!

**Include a good source of iron in your child's diet everyday.**



Iron rich foods are important to help prevent Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA). Children's red blood cells need iron to be able to carry oxygen to all parts of their bodies. So children with IDA have less oxygen in their blood. This makes them feel tired, weak, and cranky. It can lead to pale skin, poor appetite, frequent illness, poor growth, and learning problems. *One out of every ten preschoolers in California has IDA.*

### What can parents do?

- 1. Ask your doctor to screen your child for anemia.**
- 2. Serve your child iron-rich foods.** Some high iron foods are beef, chicken, beans, dark leafy greens, and fortified cereal. Read food labels to select cereals that contain *at least 45% Daily Value (DV) of iron.*
- 3. Serve high iron foods with foods that are rich in vitamin C.** Foods that are high in vitamin C help the body to absorb iron. Some vitamin-C rich foods are oranges, green peppers, broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupe, cauliflower, tomatoes and pineapple.
- 4. Limit beverages.** Your child will not be able to eat enough iron rich foods if he or she is drinking too many beverages besides water. Limit beverages to 3 cups of milk and 1 cup of 100% juice each day. Soda, Kool-aid, and other high sugar, low nutrient drinks should be "once in a while" and not every day drinks. If your child is thirsty, offer water.

## Physical Activity: Aerobic Exercise for Heart Health

### Why is aerobic exercise important?

Aerobic exercise makes the heart work harder and get stronger. This can help to prevent heart disease.

### What is aerobic exercise?

Aerobic exercise means that people are moving enough so that their hearts beat faster and their rate of breathing increases.

### Some examples of aerobic exercise are:

- walking
- bicycling
- outdoor play at playgrounds
- swimming
- playing tag



**The best thing parents can do for their preschooler (and for themselves) is to participate in aerobic exercise with their child.** Make together time fun by focusing on play (rather than exercise) when you do aerobic activity with your child.



# Healthy Beginnings Homework

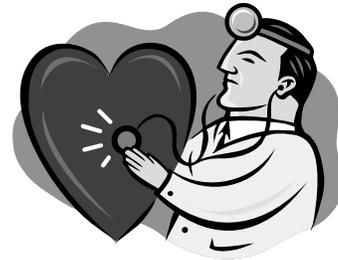


Try these fun, easy activities with your child! Every time you help your child learn a new skill, you are helping him or her to be successful and build self-esteem.

## Physical Activity: Heart Power

Children will practice an aerobic activity and hear the difference in how their heartbeat sounds when they exercise.

1. Have children put their hands over their heart to feel it beating.
2. Have children run back and forth for 20 seconds.
3. Next have children gallop like a horse for 30 seconds and then jump up and down for 30 seconds.
4. Then have children put their hands over their heart to feel how fast it is beating.
5. Explain that exercise helps make our heart muscle stronger and that this is important for a healthy body.
6. Do this activity with children and have them feel your heart beating too.



## Nutrition: Three-Can Chili

How much iron does your child need each day?

1-3 years: 7 mg

4-8 years: 10 mg

### Ingredients:

  1 (15 oz.) can of beans *or* 2 cups cooked beans (pinto, kidney, red, etc.)

  1 (15 oz.) can of corn

  1 (15 oz.) can tomatoes, chopped

### Optional additions:



4 oz. cooked ground beef



Spices (to taste): chili powder, garlic, cumin

### Directions:



1. Place the contents of all three cans (do not drain) into a pan.



2. Add optional cooked ground beef and chili powder, cumin, and/or garlic to taste.



3. Stir to mix. Heat thoroughly.

1/2 cup without ground beef: 1.2 mg iron
1/2 cup with ground beef: 1.5 mg iron



**Read it!** To teach your child more about the names of his or her body parts, try reading *My body/Mi cuerpo* by Gladys Rosa-Mendoza.