

Our little super hero

Able to leap
toy buildings
in a single bound

Keep him that way with **IRON**

Offer iron-rich foods today for a super tomorrow.

HOW MY SON became an IRON man

I was surprised when the doctor told me my son Jesse's iron test came back low. I worried I had done something wrong. Most of all, I worried about his growth. Would he grow to be the size he was intended to be?

Not only did I feel sad about Jesse's blood test results, I felt a little embarrassed and inadequate. After all, I am a nutritionist with the WIC program. I should know what to do to keep him healthy.

The doctor recommended an iron supplement and eating plan that I followed carefully. At first I tried to make special foods like beef stew that I could mash up, but those foods were time-consuming to prepare. Then I realized that I could offer Jesse simple foods that he liked more and were easier for me. He loved canned beans—kidney, black and pinto—because they are soft, tasty and easy to eat. And I loved giving them to him because all I had to do was open a can and rinse them off. I also offered him high iron cereal—easy to serve and he could eat it as finger food.

When I had more time, I cooked ground turkey and meat. I formed the turkey into tiny balls and cut the meat into tiny pieces so Jesse could eat them with his fingers.

Beans, cereals and meat are great high-iron foods, but pairing them with high vitamin C foods like strawberries, tomatoes and broccoli helps the body absorb the iron easier. Good thing Jesse loved these foods too. I chopped a few for him at each meal.

Within three months, Jesse's iron levels were back to normal. I know low iron blood is common, but I felt relieved to know that my son's growth would be OK. I was especially happy to not have to rely on supplements but I continued to serve high-iron foods. I had succeeded!

Parenting is filled with ups and downs. Even health professionals like me have a lot to learn about what children need. I can relax now knowing that Jesse is healthy, but I keep up with the high iron foods. I wonder what lessons parenting will teach me next!



Rachel and her children

Rachel's high-iron food list:

- Iron-rich cereals (all WIC cereals are high in iron)
- Meat—beef, pork, turkey
- Beans—kidney, lima, black, navy, pinto and lentils
- Fish
- Eggs
- Whole wheat bread
- Baked potato, with skin