What are heavy metals?

Heavy metals refers to the elements arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury. Exposure may come from foods or other sources.

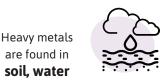
Do homemade foods have less heavy metals?

While both are safe and nutritious, a recent report shows that homemade baby foods are **not** lower in heavy metals than store-bought baby foods.



Heavy metals can come from a variety of sources:

- ✓ Arsenic: Soil and water
- ✓ Cadmium: Soil and water
- ✓ Lead: Soil. air and water
- ✓ Mercury: Water





Tips for making baby food at home:

- ✓ Wash fruits and vegetables to remove any dirt or dust
- ✓ Remove the outer peel where heavy metals may concentrate
- ✓ Cook rice in extra water then drain (like pasta!)



Whether homemade or store-bought. vary the types of fruits, vegetables and grains

Don't skip iron-fortified baby cereal,

an important source of iron & zinc!



Exposure to heavy metals

may have negative effects on neurological development during pregnancy through early childhood



Understanding Heavy Metals

BabyMatters™ by Gerber Medical Hub



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Video short with feeding tips **Medical Toxicologist** & Pediatrician Podcast



✓ Feeding a variety of nutrient-

dense foods like fruits. vegetables and whole grains ✓ Including infant cereals,

Iron helps

support healthy

brain development

an important source of iron and zinc, made from a variety of grains

Experts recommend:

✓ Choosing fish known to be lower in mercury



Adequate iron status can help

protect against absorbing

heavy metals from food

A well-nourished child is better protected

from absorbing the heavy metals

Crops grown in the ground or with excess water

can be more likely to take up heavy metals; certain fruits, vegetables & grains absorb these elements as they grow



Buying organic, locally grown and/or farmer's market foods does not change whether the foods contain heavy metals

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Foods prone to higher heavy metal levels:

- ✓ Grains: Accumulate heavy metal in the outer bran layer, so whole grains may have more than refined grains
- ✓ Rice: Takes up arsenic from being grown in flooded fields
- ✓ Leafy vegetables: Absorb cadmium from soil and water
- ✓ Root vegetables: Like carrots & sweet potatoes, absorb lead from soil
- ✓ Fatty fish: Like salmon, tuna, & mackerel, absorb mercury from water in their fatty tissue

Tips for reducing exposure to heavy metals when feeding children:

- ✓ Make sure water supply has been checked for lead
- ✓ Wash hands and foods to remove residual lead from dirt and dust
- ✓ Include foods rich in iron and zinc, especially when breastfeeding or mixed feeding
- ✓ Choose snacks made with a variety of grains, not just rice

How do heavy metals get in foods?

Heavy metals are found in the environment, including the soil and water, and certain crops and animals absorb these elements as they grow.

Can the exposure to heavy metals from foods be reduced?

Dietary variety is the best way to ensure a child gets adequate nutrition and can help minimize exposure to any one heavy metal.