



Why Babies Shouldn't Skip infant cereal



Did you know?

Infant cereal is the #1 food source of iron for infants 6–11.9 months

Around six months of age (when starting solid foods), the iron stores babies are born with begin to deplete and need to be replenished. At this stage, babies need iron from foods to meet their iron needs and help support learning ability.

Pediatricians and nutrition experts recommend iron-rich foods like infant cereal for both breastfed and formula fed infants.

Baby's top food sources of iron

Percentage of total dietary iron, infants 6–11.9 months (FITS 2016)



1
Infant Cereal
34%



2
Mixed Dishes & Meats/Protein
4%



3
Vegetables
3%



4
Fruits
3%

Even when differences in absorption were accounted for, infant cereal was still the top food source of iron.¹

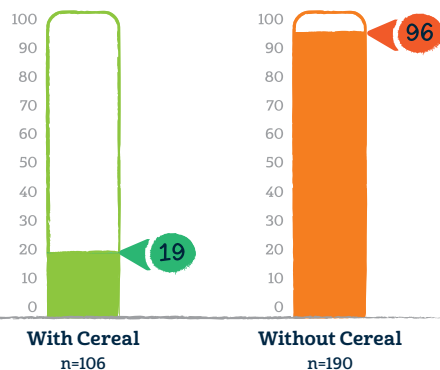
While meats and some vegetables are rich in iron, babies usually eat small amounts.

Infant cereal makes an impact because it is:

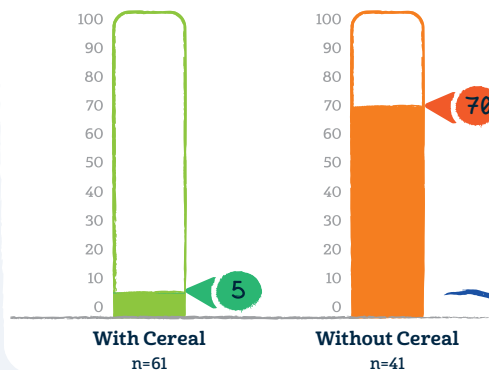
- ✓ High in iron
- ✓ Eaten often

Research shows without infant cereal,
96% of breastfed babies don't get enough iron²

% of Breastfed Infants with Inadequate Iron Intake



% of Mixed Fed Infants with Inadequate Iron Intake



*Infant cereal provides 75% of the total daily iron intake among breastfed infants who consume infant cereal.**

Just 2 servings per day meets baby's daily iron needs plus zinc, calcium, vitamin C, vitamin E, and six B vitamins for healthy development.

Even when baby is supplemented with infant formula, **70% of mixed fed infants have inadequate iron intakes without infant cereal²**

* Among 6–11.9 month old infants receiving breastmilk and infant cereal, but no infant formula. Includes nutrients from supplements. (FITS 2016 — data on file).

References: 1. Abrams SA, Hampton JC, Finn KL. A substantial proportion of 6- to 12-month-old infants have calculated daily absorbed iron below recommendations, especially those who are breastfed. *J Pediatr.* 2021;231:36-42 e2. 2. Finn K, Kineman B, Carvalho R. Concerning impact of decreasing infant cereal consumption on essential nutrient intakes of breastfed babies: feeding infants and toddlers study (FITS) 2016. *Current Developments in Nutrition.* 2019; 3(S1):P11-064-19. [ABSTRACT].

All trademarks are owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A., Vevey, Switzerland or used with permission. © 2025 Nestlé.