

# Top Food Sources of Key Nutrients in the Diets of Infants: Data from the 2016 Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS)

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## Background

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) recommend infants consume a variety of nutrient dense foods starting around 6 months of age.
- Underconsumption of iron is of public health concern among breastfed infants 6-11.9 months of age.
- Iron is a critical nutrient for brain and learning development.
- Adequate intakes of iron, calcium, folic acid, and vitamin C potentially have a modulating effect on heavy metal metabolism and may protect against low-level environmental contaminant exposure.

## Objective

- Identify the top food sources of iron, calcium, folic acid and vitamin C for infants 6-11.9 months old.

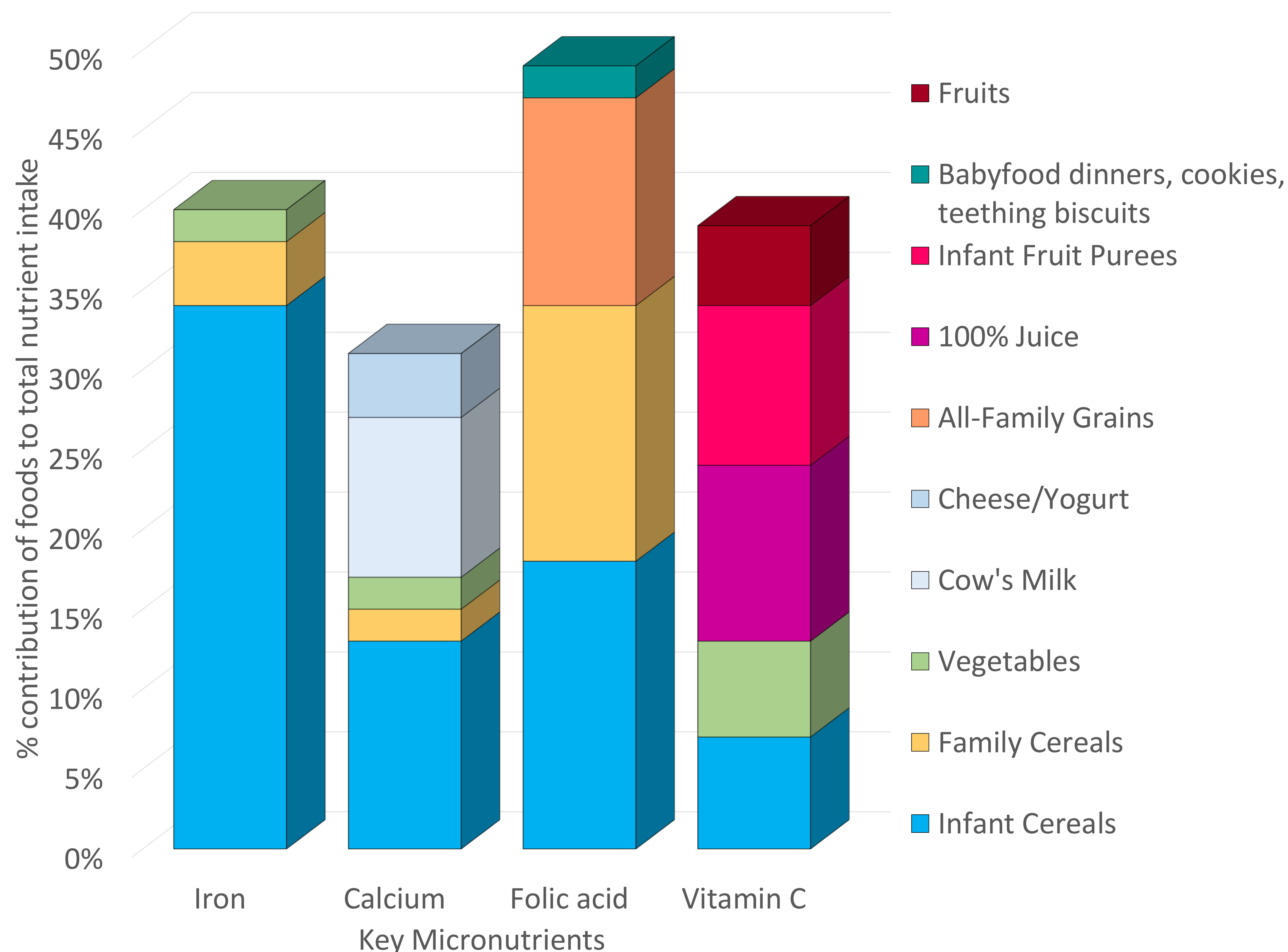
## Methods

- FITS is a large national cross-sectional survey of children ≤4y (n=3235)
- Food and beverage intake was assessed using 24-hour dietary recalls.
- The focus of this work is infants 6-11.9 months old (n=902).
- Reported foods are aligned with USDA's What We Eat in America food groups.
- The population percentage contribution of foods to total nutrient intake was determined for each nutrient.

## Results

- Infant formula and breast milk were the main contributors of nutrient intakes (50-60% of intake).
- Infant cereals are the top complementary food source of iron (34% of intake), folic acid (18% of intake), and calcium (13% of intake).
- 100% juice and fortified infant fruit purees are the top sources of vitamin C in the diet (11% and 10% of intake, respectively).
- Family cereals also contribute to iron and folic acid intake (4% and 15% of intake, respectively).

Top food sources of key nutrients in the diets of infants 6-11.9 months of age



## Conclusions

- The top food sources of nutrients are those contributing most to meeting the needs of infants.
- These foods are fortified infant cereals for iron and folic acid, 100% juice and fruit purees for vitamin C, and dairy foods for calcium.
- These foods, and the key nutrients they provide, should be considered when providing complementary feeding guidance to ensure dietary adequacy and to help minimize the absorption and effects of heavy metals in the body.

## Relevant References

- <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>
- <https://data.nal.usda.gov/dataset/what-we-eat-america-wweia-database>

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