



Iron supplements for babies

Why does your baby need an iron supplement?

Preterm babies born before 36 weeks or babies weighing less than 2000 grams at birth may develop anaemia. This means they have low levels of haemoglobin in their blood.

Haemoglobin is a protein that contains iron and is essential for carrying oxygen around the body. Giving iron supplements restores iron levels and helps increase haemoglobin.

When should you start?

Start giving your baby an iron supplement from day 28 after birth if they are not getting fortified expressed breastmilk or preterm formula.

When should you stop?

For breastfed babies

Give the iron supplement until they are 6 months corrected gestational age. This is 6 months after their due date.

For formula-fed babies

Give the iron supplement until they are 3 months corrected gestational age. This is 3 months after their due date.

Your healthcare team can help you work out your baby's corrected gestational age if you are not sure.

What supplement should you use?



In Australia, guidelines recommend ferrous sulphate oral liquid for infants. The Ferro-Liquid brand (pictured) contains 30 mg/mL ferrous sulphate, which is equivalent to 6 mg/mL of elemental iron.

How much should your baby have?

- Give your baby one dose every day with a feed. The dose is 0.5 mL per kilogram (kg) of your baby's weight.
- To work out the correct dose, multiply your baby's weight (in kg) by 0.5 mL.
 - For example, if your baby weighs 2.6 kg, multiply 2.6 by 0.5 to get 1.3 mL.
- The maximum dose is 2.5 mL per day.

Your baby's weight	Dose
2-3 kg	1-1.5 mL
3-4 kg	1.5-2 mL
4-5 kg	2-2.5 mL

Where can you buy it?

You can buy ferrous sulphate oral liquid at any pharmacy. You don't need a prescription.

If you need help working out the correct dose, you can ask your pharmacist.

For more information

If you have any questions or concerns, call the Royal Women's Hospital Medicines Information Service or see your local pharmacist.

Medicines Information Service

The Royal Women's Hospital
Hours: 9 am – 4 pm (Monday to Friday)
T: (03) 8345 3190
E: drug.information@thewomens.org.au

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732 (24-hour support service)

1800respect.org.au

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your or your baby's healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you or your baby require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department. Reference: The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. Clinical Practice Guidelines. Iron deficiency. Available at: https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/guideline_index/iron_deficiency/ (Accessed March 2026). © The Royal Women's Hospital 2026