

**OHIO SNAP-ED**

# Healthy Eating to Reduce the Effects of Lead Exposure



Good nutrition is one way to protect your family from lead. Children exposed to too much lead could develop problems with growth and learning. Talk with your doctor to see if you or your child should be tested for lead.

Three key nutrients can play a role in protecting the body from the harmful effects of lead: calcium, iron, and vitamin C. These nutrients help the body absorb less lead and are part of a healthy diet.

## 1 // Calcium

Calcium helps to reduce lead absorption. It is also important for strong bones and teeth.

How much do children need each day?	
Age	Calcium (mg)
6-12 months	260 mg
1-3 years	700 mg
4-8 years	1000 mg
9-13 years	1300 mg

## 2// Iron

Iron helps protect the body from lead. Your body uses iron to make red blood cells.

How much do children need each day?	
Age	Iron (mg)
6-12 months	11 mg
1-3 years	7 mg
4-8 years	10 mg
9-13 years	8 mg

## 3// Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps your body fight infections and heal wounds.

How much do children need each day?	
Age	Vitamin C (mg)
6-12 months	50 mg
1-3 years	15 mg
4-8 years	25 mg
9-13 years	45 mg

# Choose These Nutrient Rich Foods to Combat Lead Absorption

## Calcium

- Milk
- Some alternative milks (Soy, etc.) \*Check the nutrition label for calcium content)
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Canned Salmon or Tuna
- Dark Green Vegetables: Broccoli, Collard Greens, Spinach, Kale
- Dried Figs
- Tofu
- Fortified Orange Juice

## Iron

- Meats (Chicken, Pork, Beef, Seafood)
- Beans: Pinto, Black, Navy, Kidney, etc.
- Dark Leafy Vegetables: Spinach, Kale, Collards
- Eggs
- Peanut Butter
- Fortified Cereals
- Dried Fruits: Raisins, Prunes, Apricots

## Vitamin C

- Bell Peppers (all colors)
- Oranges, Orange Juice
- Kiwi
- Broccoli
- Strawberries
- Brussel Sprouts
- Baked Potato
- Grapefruit
- Cantaloupe
- Mango
- Pumpkin
- Tomato

## Cooking and Serving Tips

- Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead. Provide children with healthy snacks throughout the day.
- Raw fruits and vegetables have higher amounts of nutrients.
- Overcooking vegetables can reduce the amount of Vitamin C.
- Limit fatty foods in your child's diet. A high fat diet can make a child's body absorb lead faster.
- Pair Vitamin C rich foods with Iron rich foods for better nutrient absorption.

## Snack and Meal Ideas

- Iron fortified cereal with milk
- Celery and peanut butter with raisins "Bugs on a log"
- Yogurt with strawberries
- Grilled cheese and tomato sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Scrambled eggs or omelets with cheese and spinach
- Vegetables (Broccoli, Red Bell Peppers) and Yogurt-based dips
- Tuna or salmon salad sandwiches

## References

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics. *Fight Lead Poisoning with a Healthy Diet*. EPA-747-F-01-004 October 2019.

Find healthy recipes and other ideas at [celebrateyourplate.com](https://celebrateyourplate.com)



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Better food choices for healthier Buckeyes