If you require further advice:
Please contact your Health Visitor, GP or local Children’s Centre.

‘I’ is for Iron
Dietary advice for children

NHS South of Tyne and Wear (serving Gateshead Primary Care Trust, South Tynesside Primary Care Trust and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust) is committed to raising the standard of written information for patients, their carers, people who use the NHS and the general public.

If you require further copies of this leaflet please contact The Public Health Improvement Information Team Tel: 283 1124 / 283 1125 / 283 1126 Email: healthinfo@sotw.nhs.uk

This information can be made available in another format or language on request. Please contact the Communications and PR Team Tel: 0191 529 7118 Email: mopil@sotw.nhs.uk
Iron deficiency is very common in young children. It is essential for your child's growth and development. Babies are born with a natural supply of iron but by six months of age these stores are low. If your child's diet does not have iron containing foods, these stores will not be replaced and your child may become anaemic. Poor appetite, tiredness, irritability, poor growth and an increased number of infections can be symptoms of anaemia.

Iron is found in a variety of foods such as:

- **Bread**
- **Meat**
- **Fish**
- **Eggs**
- **Cereals**
- **Fruit and vegetables**

**Examples of foods containing Iron**

- **Breakfast cereals**
  Offer breakfast cereals which are fortified with iron at least once a day as part of a meal e.g. weetabix, cornflakes, rice crispies.

- **Bread**
  Choose wholemeal bread and pasta instead of white if you can.

- **Eggs**
  Eggs are high in iron, especially the yolk.

- **Meat**
  Meat is a good source of iron. Try and make sure your child has some everyday. Beef, ham, sausages, corned beef, lamb and pork (including mince) are best. Chicken and turkey also contain some iron. Liver and kidney are very high in iron.

- **Fruit and Vegetables**
  Green vegetables like cabbage, broccoli, peas and spinach contain iron. Dried fruit such as apricots and raisins can be offered at mealtimes or could be added to cereals. Fresh fruit can be offered as a snack.

- **Fish**
  Fish contains iron. Oily fish such as tinned tuna, salmon and sardines are best. Fish fingers also contain some iron.

**Helpful Hints**

Vitamin C from fruit and vegetables helps our body to use the iron in food. It is important to give your child some green vegetables, fruit or fresh fruit juice (unsweetened) at each meal.

If your child does not like meat or is vegetarian, it is important to give beans and pulses every day e.g. baked beans, butter beans, lentils, chick peas or black eyed beans.

Instead of offering diluted squash, offer a glass of fresh fruit juice (unsweetened) at each meal.

Offer at least one lightly cooked vegetable with each meal.

Don't offer tea or high fibre foods such as bran, as this can reduce the amount of iron absorbed by your child's body.