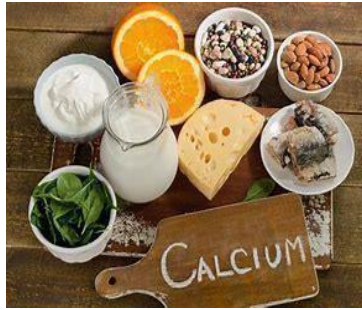


Nutrition and Lead



What you choose to feed your family affects lead absorption

Calcium is not only an essential nutrient for healthy brain growth, but it is also a primary blocker of lead absorption. This is important because Lead causes permanent brain damage. For an unborn baby, an infant and a young child, their brain is developing rapidly. A child or pregnant woman drinking milk or eating other calcium sources throughout the day is the best way to promote healthy brain growth, while limiting lead absorption.

Calcium foods: Milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu, kale, broccoli, spinach, collards, turnip greens, salmon, sardines.



Iron deficiency, or anemia, can increase lead absorption and often co-exists with lead poisoning. In addition, research indicates that lack of iron in young children can be an independent neurotoxin, as well as enhancing the bad effects of lead poisoning on the central nervous system. But similar to Calcium, adequate Iron intake lowers lead absorption.

Iron foods:

Lean red meats, fish, whole grain breads/cereals, peanut butter, nuts, dried beans, lentils, spinach.



Vitamin C enhances Iron absorption and so decreases the absorption of Lead. Taken together, Iron and Vitamin C are a strong team to build the immune system to ward off Lead.

Vitamin C foods: Oranges, tomatoes, grapefruits, juices fortified with vitamin C, berries, kiwi, red or green bell peppers, leafy greens, watermelon.



Regular Meals & Snacks with Calcium, Iron and Vitamin C will minimize absorption of ingested lead. Full stomachs are less able to absorb lead. Infants, young children and pregnant women should ideally consume these foods every three to four hours, or in six smaller meals per day, to lessen lead retention. Think periodic “grazing” rather than longer spaced meals.

Cooking with COLE: to learn more about healthy, lead-fighting meals to serve your family, COLE Parents LEAD organizers conduct cooking classes at Hephatha Lutheran Church the second Monday of every month. Free groceries and recipes are provided to help you get started. See the COLE calendar for details:

<https://coalitiononleademergency.org/calendar/>



Learn more about how Nutrition impacts lead absorption:

- From Hunger Task Force: Well Fed Means Less Lead:
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/well-fed-means-less-lead.pdf>
- From CDC (Center for Disease Control): Five things parents can do to lower their child's lead level: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/docs/5things-508.pdf>
- From Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units: Management of Childhood Lead Exposure: https://www.pehsu.net/Lead_Exposure.html