

## Iron medication for low-birth-weight infants (< 2500 g) at home

Low-birth-weight babies require several times more iron than babies with a normal birth weight. Although the body's iron reserves are well utilized, they are low and the child needs iron for blood cell formation, growth and brain development from both food and iron medicine.

All babies with a birth weight under 2500 g are given iron supplements from 2-4 weeks of age. The dose is increased as the baby gains weight (see Table). Supplementary iron is usually given up to the age of 12 months.

If iron medication is associated with intestinal problems, continue giving iron at the same dose every second day and after two weeks return to daily dosing. If the intestinal problems continue, contact the rehabilitation instructor or your child's doctor.

The blood hemoglobin levels (Hb) are at their lowest at the age of 6-8 weeks in all children and gradually increase so that low-weight and normal-weight children will have equal levels of Hb by one year of age at the latest.

Iron supplement is given as a ferrous sulfate preparation (Enfamil Fer-In-Sol®). The dose of iron supplementation is approx. 2 mg/kg/day, but the total amount of supplementary iron is no more than 15 mg/day. A child gets part of the iron from milk and other food (meat products, cereals).

If a low-birth-weight child receives a special formula designed for premature infants (Premilon®), the dose of iron supplement is 0.2 ml (Enfamil Fer-In-Sol®). When switching from a preterm formula to a regular formula, follow the instructions below.

Iron is given about 15–30 minutes before a milk meal directly into the mouth with a spoon or syringe and later with fruit puree, which improves its absorption.

Dose of additional iron when the child receives **breast milk or regular baby formula:**

Child's weight	Iron supplement dose Enfamil Fer-In-Sol® 15 mg/ml
2 kg	0,3 ml
3 kg	0,4 ml
4 kg	0,5 ml
5 kg	0,7 ml
6 kg	0,8 ml
≥ 7 kg	1,0 ml

## Dosing instructions for iron supplement for the baby

Start at 2 through 4 weeks of age

Stop at the age of 12 months

