

# Toddler friendly, iron-rich meat meals for the whole family.

- **Toddlers may prefer moist and tender food textures because they are easier to eat.**
- **These basic recipes and ideas will serve 2 adults and 2 toddlers.**
- **They explain how to cook meat in different ways and keep it tender.**
- **Overcooking beef and lamb will make the meat tough and chewy.**

## Basic Stir Fry Recipe

- Mix 400g beef or lamb strips with 2 tsp oil.
- Stir fry meat in a hot wok in small batches for a minute or two - removing each batch when cooked.
- Add 1 sliced carrot, 1 sliced zucchini and 1/2 cup of green beans or snow peas. Cook stirring for 2-3 minutes with a sprinkling of water.
- Return strips and heat through with 1 tsp honey and 1 tbsp soy sauce for 1-2 minutes.
- Serve with noodles, pasta, rice or couscous.

## Variations to the Basic Stir Fry Recipe

- *Try different flavours* - replace honey and soy sauce with:
  - 3/4 cup chopped tomatoes, 1 tsp tomato paste, 1/4 cup stock *or*
  - 2 tbsp plum sauce *or*
  - 2 tbsp satay sauce and 1/3 cup coconut milk *or*
  - 1/3 cup orange juice, 2 tbsp soy sauce and 1/3 cup orange segments
- *Try different vegetables:*
  - shredded cabbage, carrot and bean sprouts
  - broccoli, capsicum and squash
  - carrots, mushrooms and bok choy
  - cauliflower, frozen peas and sweetcorn

## Basic Casserole Recipe

- Use 500g of diced lean lamb or diced lean beef.
- Fry 1 chopped onion in 1 tsp of oil. Remove.
- Brown the meat in small batches, using 1 tsp of oil with each batch.
- Return meat and onion to pan and add 1/2 capsicum, 1/2 cup cubed pumpkin, 1 chopped stick of celery, 100g mushrooms and a 425g can of tomatoes (chopped). Add enough water to just cover (if needed).
- Simmer, covered for 1 - 1 1/2 hours or until fork tender. Add 1 sliced zucchini and a 425g can of baked beans and simmer for 30 minutes.
- Serve with rice, pasta or bread.



## Variations to the Basic Casserole Recipe

- Add 1/2 cup cauliflower, 1 sliced carrot, 1 cubed potato and 1/2 cup peas to the meat and onion. Flavour with 1/2 tsp curry powder, a handful of sultanas and enough stock to cover.

## Basic Mince Sauce Recipe

- Heat 2 tsp oil in a large deep pan. Fry 1 chopped onion and 2 cloves crushed garlic for 1 - 2 minutes.
- Add 500g lean mince stirring constantly and breaking up with spoon until well browned and no longer pink.
- Stir in 1/4 cup tomato paste and 400g canned tomatoes and 1 tsp sugar.
- Add vegetables such as 1 chopped capsicum or 1/2 cup chopped mushrooms.
- When boiling, reduce to low heat, cover and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
- Serve with pasta (use different shapes and colour), on a split baked potato or with rice.



## Variations to the Basic Mince Sauce Recipe

- Add baked beans or sweetcorn to the mince sauce. Place in lavash bread, sprinkle with cheese and roll up to make a burrito.
- Use sauce to make lasagne.
- For shepherd's pie - cover heated sauce with mashed potato. Sprinkle with grated cheese and grill until golden.
- Add 1 cup shredded cabbage, 1/2 cup bean sprouts, 1 grated carrot and 1 grated zucchini to the onion and garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Add mince and cook until well browned. Serve with noodles.

## Basic Burger or Meatball Recipe

- Combine 500g lean mince, 1 beaten egg and 1 cup soft bread crumbs.
- Add 1 grated carrot and 1 grated zucchini.
- Shape into patties or balls with wet hands.
- Cook over high heat on barbecue or in frypan:
  - Burgers - 5-7 minutes each side.
  - Meatballs - 10 minutes, turning occasionally.
- Test by cutting open to check colour - it must no longer be pink inside.
- Serve with sliced cucumber and tomato sauce inside a soft bread roll.



## Variations to the Basic Burger or Meatball Recipe

- For Asian-style burgers, add 1 grated potato, 1/4 cup chopped bamboo shoots, 1 tsp tomato sauce and 2 tsp soy sauce to the mince, egg and breadcrumb mix.
- Add 2 tsp tomato sauce and 1 tsp chopped basil for Italian meatballs. Serve with pasta and a tomato-based sauce.
- Add 2 tsp fruit chutney for fruity meat balls which can be served cold with soft salad vegetables and soft, dried fruit.

# Fast food for hungry toddlers.



## Toddler Food Safety

- **Your toddler should sit quietly while eating (if possible).**
- **Keep an eye on your toddler when they are eating.**
- **Avoid hard foods and foods that can break off into hard pieces.**

## Jaffles

Use leftover mince sauce. Sprinkle grated cheese and make jaffles using an electric sandwich maker or spoon into a pita pocket. Cut open and allow jaffles to cool before serving.

## Savoury fingers

Spread a tomato-based sauce on a muffin. Top with sliced leftover cooked meat (roast beef, corned silverside or pastrami), mushrooms and drained pineapple pieces. Top with grated cheese. Bake in moderate oven for 10 - 15 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

## Cold platter

Slice leftover steak into strips across the grain or chop meat off leftover lamb chops or cutlets. Serve with corn on the cob, sliced cherry tomatoes and sliced cucumber. Toddlers love to dip food in yoghurt or tomato sauce.

## Pinwheels

Spread 1 lavash bread with cream cheese. Top with 3 slices of roast meat and slices of tomato and lettuce leaves. Roll up. Slice to serve.

## Ravioli or Tortellini

Serve with commercial pasta sauces.

## Meatballs, 100% beef sausages & rissoles

Available at the delicatessen section of supermarkets. They are great finger foods or can be served inside a small pita pocket or bread roll with sliced vegetables and yoghurt.

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This information has been independently reviewed by the Dietitians Association of Australia. For expert nutrition and dietary advice contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). To find an APD in your local area call 1800 812 942 or look at the Find a Dietitian section of the Dietitians Association of Australia internet site [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

Meat and Livestock Australia is a DAA industry partner.

These are guidelines only and are not intended as medical or nutritional advice. Toddlers' development and eating patterns vary and parents should be guided by their toddler's individual needs. If you have specific concerns about your toddler's iron needs discuss them with your Child Health Nurse, dietitian or family GP.

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Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) represents the beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat producers of Australia and manages research and development, marketing and promotions on behalf of the industry. MLA has a commitment to providing health professionals and all Australians with accurate nutrition information and promotes the role of red meat as part of a healthy balanced diet.



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# Easy iron-rich meals for toddlers.

## Why is iron so important for toddlers?

- Iron carries oxygen in the body and helps to create energy for growth.
- Iron is essential for normal brain development.
- Iron helps maintain a healthy immune system.

## How much iron does my toddler need?

A study found that children consuming meat at least 4 times a week were less likely to be iron deficient.

The researchers\* stated that a serving of high absorbable iron can be obtained from:

- 1 tablespoon of cooked red meat *or*
- 3½ - 7 tablespoons of cooked chicken *or*
- 8 tablespoons of cooked fish.

This highlights red meat is very rich in iron.

\* *Mira et al. (1996) British Medical Journal*

## What if my toddler refuses to eat?

- Toddlers are good at controlling their food intake according to their growth patterns - so let them set the pace.
- Let your toddler work out food preferences by serving foods separately on the plate and preparing food in different ways.
- Too much juice, sweet drinks and snacks (biscuits, chips, fruit bars) may cause toddlers to not be hungry at meal times. Give water instead.
- Milk (cows' or soy) is a very filling fluid and excess consumption has been linked to iron deficiency in toddlers. 3 cups per day is enough.



The meat in this meal will increase the absorption of iron from vegetables and pasta by up to four times.

## Two easy steps to an iron-rich diet for toddlers.

### 1. Offer these iron-rich foods regularly.

They contain iron which is easily absorbed by the body.

#### High iron foods:

beef, lamb, liver.

#### Medium iron foods:

pork, chicken, fish.

(The redder the meat, the higher the iron content.)

### 2. "Food-combine" to maximise iron

absorption at meals. Meat or a vitamin C-rich food increases the absorption of iron by up to 4 times from foods like cereals, vegetables, legumes, eggs or nutpastes.