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Iron in Your Diet [Facilitator's Guide]

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Iron in Your Diet

Lesson Goals

After this lesson, participants will:

- Understand why iron is an important nutrient
- Know how much iron is needed by individuals
- Identify good food sources of iron
- Plan balanced meals using good iron sources
- Name several ways to stretch the food dollar when purchasing iron-rich foods

Before Teaching the Lesson

- Review the mineral section of the Self-Study Workbook.
- Read *Iron in Your Diet* (NEP-215).
- Check homemaker's food recall records and Food Behavior Checklist for good sources of iron.
- Check to see if the homemaker is participating in WIC. Be familiar with the iron-rich foods offered through the WIC program.
- Collect food models, comparison cards and food labels for good iron sources.
- Check grocery advertisements for prices of iron-rich foods.

Teaching Tools

- *Iron in Your Diet* (NEP-215)
- Power Point presentation "Iron in Your Diet"
- Food models or pictures of foods cut from magazines. (Try to have examples of foods from different food groups.)
- Comparison cards
- Food labels and packages, including cereal boxes
- MyPyramid Worksheet
- *Meal Planning Lesson* (NEP-208)
- *Seasonal Menus* (NEP-SBB 101-104)
- NEP Food and Nutrition Calendar
- NEP recipe cards
- Food Stamp Nutrition Connection Recipe Finder (<http://www.nal.usda.gov/recipes.php>)
- Grocery Store Advertisements
- Refer to your Lesson List for other resources.

Points to Stress

1. Iron is a very important mineral used by every living cell in the body. It is important for building muscles and blood.
2. Too little iron can cause anemia. Anemic people feel tired and weak. They get sick more often.
3. Everyone needs iron but some may need more than others. Pregnant women, menstruating women, infants, children and teens need the most iron. Iron is found in many foods but not in large quantities, so it is often difficult to get adequate amounts.
4. Meats, poultry, fish and beans are important sources of iron. Liver and other organ meats are especially good sources.
5. Many foods in the Grains group have extra iron added (fortified). Read package labels to determine whether a food is a good source of iron.
6. The word "enriched" on the label means that the iron lost during processing has been replaced. Flour and products made from flour will have the word "enriched" on their label. Specify that enriched products are not whole grain products.
7. Foods in the Milk group are not good sources of iron. Parents who bottle-feed their babies should use an iron-fortified formula.
8. Eating or drinking foods rich in vitamin C in combination with iron-rich plant foods such as bread, cereal, dried beans and certain vegetables and fruits will help your body make better use of iron in these foods.
9. Watermelon, spinach, green peas, lima beans, raisins and prunes are some of the best fruit and vegetable sources of iron.
10. Citrus fruits, melons, papayas, strawberries, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, sweet peppers, tomatoes, and greens are some of the best sources of vitamin C.
11. Careful meal planning is very important in order to provide each member of the family with recommended amounts of iron.

Ideas for Teaching the Lesson

1. Review what you taught the homemaker on your last visit.
 - a. What information has she used?
 - b. What new things has she tried?
2. Review food recalls with the homemaker to evaluate iron content of her diet.
3. Review *Iron in Your Diet* (NEP-215) with the homemaker.
4. Use the flip chart or Power Point presentation "Iron in Your Diet."
5. Using food models, ask homemaker to select iron-rich foods.
6. Help the homemaker compare costs of iron-rich foods and select the best buys.
7. Have the homemaker plan menus for one day to meet the iron needs of family members.
8. Identify recipes for iron-rich foods.

Ideas for Teaching Small Groups

1. Review the handout *Iron in Your Diet* with the homemakers. Discuss and demonstrate how to choose and prepare foods for a high-iron diet.
2. Demonstrate an iron-rich recipe for the group.
3. Show the Power Point presentation "Iron in Your Diet."

How to Tell What the Homemaker(s) Learned

Immediately following the lesson:

- Ask homemaker to describe how a person low in iron might feel and look.
- Ask the homemaker to identify the good sources of iron on the seasonal NEP menus (NEP-SBB 101-104) or NEP calendar.

At a later visit:

- Have homemaker name iron-rich foods she included in her diet since last visit.
- Review the food recalls for sources of iron.

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