Today’s piece was prepared by Derek Sylte, MS-4, based on a story from the Los Angeles Times entitled “Protect your child from iron deficiency”

<http://www.latimes.com/health/hk-iron-deficiency-protection,0,1398508.story>

The article is written by a pediatrician journalist, summarizing a recently published American Academy of Pediatrics subcommittee’s dietary iron recommendations. The author reports the committee’s review, reporting iron deficiency in 4% of 6-month olds, 12% of 12-month olds, and 6-15% of 1-3 year old children. Children at increased risk of iron deficiency include preterm infants, exclusively breastfed infants and children with developmental disabilities. AAP recommendations on prevention and screening are reviewed. Specifically, the article encourages consumption of a diet with foods rich in natural iron as primary sources; supplementation when dietary intake is inadequate; and screening infants beginning 9-12 months of age and again at 15-18 months.

This article offers a very brief, but helpful, overview of iron deficiency for parents of young children. It gives guidance on how much iron their children need, how to get it and how to screen for deficiency.

It cites a recent study from a reputable source. Information that is absent in the article includes why iron deficiency is important and signs/symptoms of deficiency. Additionally, while the article correctly points out the lifelong potential outcomes to brain development if young children are iron-deficiency anemic, parents who read this article may be susceptible to providing children with too much iron by believing that if some is good, more is better. Excess supplemental vitamin and mineral intake is a real danger in well-intentioned parents. A related caution is that iron supplements often are marketed looking like candy, and overdoses can be fatal.

Parents interested in useful medical information may find the following resources helpful:

**IRON DEFICIENCY RESOURCES**

CDC:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/vitamins/iron.html>

Original article in Pediatrics:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2010-2576v1>

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics – IN THE NEWS!