

CONSUMPTION OF IRON-RICH FOODS AMONG CHILDREN

Outcome indicator

Indicator Phrasing

English: % of children aged 6–23/59 months of age who consumed an iron-rich food the previous day or night

French: % d'enfants âgés de 6 à 23/59 mois ayant consommé des aliments riches en fer le jour ou la nuit précédents

Spanish: % de niños de 6-23/59 meses de edad que consumieron un alimento rico en hierro el día o la noche anterior

Portuguese: % de crianças com idades entre 6 e 23/59 meses que consumiram alimentos ricos em ferro no dia ou noite anterior

Czech: % dětí ve věku 6-23/59 měsíců, které během uplynulého dne a noci konzumovaly na železo bohatou potravinu

What is its purpose?

The indicator measures the proportion of children who in the past day or night consumed any iron-rich food. Iron deficiency impairs children's physical and cognitive development and increases the risk of morbidity.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

There are **two ways of gaining the required data:**

- > extracting it from your assessment of children's overall dietary diversity
- > assessing the consumption of iron-rich foods only

In both cases, you first have to decide whether you will **count as "iron-rich foods"** only animal sources (iron from such sources is absorbed more easily) or also plant sources. IndiKit recommends that you report on both: 1) *% of children who consumed animal source of iron* and 2) *% of children who consumed animal and/or plant source of iron*.

A) Extracting the Data from Overall Dietary Diversity Survey

1) If your survey involves collecting data for [IDDS](#) or [MDD](#) indicators, ensure that all consumed meals are *initially categorized into the nine food groups* specified in FAO's [Guidelines for Measuring Household and Individual Dietary Diversity](#) (at the bottom of page 24 – WDDS groups). This will enable

you to have a separate group for dark green leafy vegetables, an important plant source of iron.

2) As the next step, **identify the number of children who ate:**

- i) any of the animal sources of iron – food groups: “meat and fish” and “organ meats”
- ii) any of the animal and/or plant sources of iron – food groups: “meat and fish”, “organ meat”, “dark green leafy vegetables” or “legumes and nuts”

3) To **calculate the indicator’s value**, divide the number of children who consumed iron-rich foods the previous day or night by the total number of surveyed children. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

B) Assessing the Consumption of Iron Rich Foods Only

1) Follow the same [methodology used for assessing individual dietary diversity](#). Similarly, as above, use the nine food groups described in [FAO’s Guidance](#) (at the bottom of page 24). The food groups that indicate the consumption of iron-rich foods are: “meat and fish”, “organ meat”, “dark green leafy vegetables” or “legumes and nuts”

2) As the next step, **identify the number of children who ate:**

- i) any of the animal sources of iron – food groups: “meat and fish” and “organ meats”
- ii) any of the animal and/or plant sources of iron – food groups: “meat and fish”, “organ meat”, “dark green leafy vegetables” or “legumes and nuts”

3) To **calculate the indicator’s value**, divide the number of children who consumed iron-rich foods the previous day or night by the total number of surveyed children. Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

Disaggregate by

[Disaggregate](#) the data by gender, age group and [wealth](#).

Important Comments

1) The data required for this indicator is **prone to seasonal variations**. Do your best to collect baseline and endline data in the same period of a year; otherwise, it is very likely that they will not be comparable.

2) This indicator relies on accurate age assessment. Since people often do not remember the exact dates of their children’s birth, the data collectors should **always verify the child’s age**. This can be done by reviewing the child’s birth certificate, vaccination card or another document; however, since

many caregivers do not have such documents (and since they can include mistakes), it is essential that your data collectors are able to **verify the child's age by using local events calendars**. Read FAO's Guidelines (see below) to learn how to prepare local events calendars and how to train data collectors in their correct use.

3) Make sure that you **do not collect data during the fasting periods** (such as pre-Easter time or Ramadan) **or during fasting days**.

Access Additional Guidance

- FAO (2008) [Guidelines for Estimating the Month and Year of Birth of Young Children](#)