Press release, Paris, 26 November 2026, 8:15 a.m. (CET)

New research reveals health and economic impact of iron deficiency anemia, with an estimated global cost of $336 billion

- **Anemia affects around 40% of children under five worldwide, with iron deficiency a leading cause. Iron deficiency anemia can affect children's growth, immunity and cognitive development.**
- **New research by Capital Economics [1], commissioned by Danone, estimates a combined $336.1 billion global economic cost associated with iron deficiency anemia (IDA) in 2025.**
- **On World IDA Day, Danone reaffirms its commitment to collective action to raise awareness and expand access to screening solutions with the launch of its IronUp! Checker.**

Iron deficiency anemia (IDA) is a widespread but often overlooked health challenge. Anemia affects around 40% of children under five worldwide, according to the World Health Organization, with iron deficiency a leading cause. In children, IDA can affect growth, immunity and cognitive development, with consequences that may extend well beyond early childhood.

Yet the condition can be difficult to recognize and may go undetected because of low awareness, limited screening and inadequate nutrition. While IDA has multiple causes and risk factors, much more can be done to prevent iron deficiency, raise awareness and identify children at risk earlier.

New evidence underlines the wider consequences.

New research by Capital Economics, commissioned by Danone, adds another dimension to the impact of iron deficiency, by quantifying IDA's broader economic consequences. The study estimates $115.3 billion in reduced future lifetime earnings linked to a single-year cohort of children with IDA. It also estimates that around 480 million workers worldwide were affected by IDA in 2025, resulting in $220.8 billion in lost labor income. Together, these impacts represent an estimated global economic cost of $336.1 billion in 2025.

Systemic health challenges require collective action.

The causes of iron deficiency anemia are multifactorial; therefore, no single actor can address childhood IDA alone. Meaningful progress requires governments, healthcare professionals, international organizations, scientists, NGOs, communities and companies

[1] *The research was conducted by Capital Economics, commissioned by Danone, using publicly available data. It estimates the economic impact of IDA through lost productivity among adults and the long-term effects of childhood IDA on future earnings.*

to combine their expertise, capabilities and reach. By working together, these actors can strengthen awareness, support earlier risk recognition and help more children and families access appropriate screening, care and nutritional solutions.

"Iron plays an essential role in children's growth and development, yet iron deficiency anemia often goes undetected. No single organization can address a challenge of this scale alone. Through IronUp!, Danone is bringing together nutrition science, innovation and partnerships to raise awareness, support the early identification of children at risk and help solutions reach more children and families. It is our way of contributing to tackling this public health challenge," said **Isabelle Esser, Chief Research, Innovation, Quality and Food Safety Officer of Danone.**

Supporting an Iron Strong generation

Danone's global IronUp! program brings together nutrition science, innovation and partnerships to raise awareness, support screening and advance science-led nutritional solutions for children. Building on more than four million screenings supported to date, Danone aims to reach 14 million screenings by 2030, turning this commitment into measurable action for more children and families, in line with its mission of bringing health through food.

The IronUp! Checker, launched today, is Danone's latest innovation contributing to this wider effort. Designed for children aged six months to six years, the free, non-invasive digital tool is accessible by smartphone and combines a short questionnaire with photographs to provide families with an informational assessment of potential IDA risk[2].

"One of the challenges with iron deficiency anemia is that it can easily be missed. Many children affected do not show obvious symptoms, giving families little reason to suspect a problem or seek screening, particularly when this involves an invasive test. The IronUp! Checker provides a simple, non-invasive way to become more aware of potential risks and recognize when further advice or testing from a healthcare professional may be appropriate," said **Professor Dr. Muhammad Yazid bin Jalaludin**, **Senior Consultant Pediatric Endocrinologist at the University Malaya Medical Centre.**

The IronUp! Checker was previewed at the Paris Peace Forum Child Summit in Paris on November 10-11, where the IronUp! program was presented as Danone's first concrete contribution to the newly launched Action Hub for Children. The initiative reflects a shared ambition to mobilize different sectors around practical action for children's health. The Checker is one element of this broader commitment. It does not diagnose IDA or replace professional medical evaluation but can help families become more aware of potential risks and recognize when further professional advice may be appropriate.

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To access the IronUp! Checker, click **here**.

Find the media kit including access to the full Capital Economics study by clicking **here.**

[2]*The IronUp! Checker is not a diagnostic tool or medical device and does not replace professional medical evaluation.*

About Danone (www.danone.com)

Danone is a leading global food and beverage company operating in three health-focused, fast-growing, and on-trend Categories: Essential Dairy & Plant-Based products, Waters and Specialized Nutrition. With a long-standing mission of bringing health through food to as many people as possible, Danone aims to inspire healthier and more sustainable eating and drinking practices while committing to achieve measurable nutritional, social, societal and environmental impact. Danone has defined its Renew strategy to restore growth, competitiveness, and value creation for the long term. With c.90,000 employees and products sold in over 120 markets, Danone generated €27.3 billion in sales in 2025. Danone's portfolio includes leading international brands (Actimel, Activia, Alpro, Aptamil, Danette, Danio, Danonino, evian, Nutricia, Nutrilon, Volvic, among others) as well as strong local and regional brands (including AQUA, blédina, Bonafont, Cow & Gate, Mizone, Oikos and Silk). Listed on Euronext Paris and present on the OTCQX platform via an ADR (American Depositary Receipt) program, Danone is a component stock of leading sustainability indexes including those managed by Moody's and Sustainalytics, as well as MSCI ESG Indexes, FTSE4Good Index Series, Bloomberg Gender Equality Index and Access to Nutrition Index. Danone achieved B Corp™ certification at global level in 2025.