



## Cows' milk-free diet for breastfeeding mothers



If your baby is allergic to cow's milk protein, you can continue to breastfeed. You do not necessarily need to use a prescribed formula. If you decide to follow a cow's milk free diet whilst breastfeeding, there are several things to consider. **You should only follow this diet if you are taking a calcium and vitamin D supplement.** Excluding cow's milk is difficult; ask your GP, Health Visitor or Paediatrician for a referral to a Paediatric Dietitian for more help.

## Cow's milk protein allergy is *different* from lactose intolerance.

### Cow's milk protein allergy can affect your baby in several ways:

*Digestion:* reflux, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation, anaemia, weight loss

*Skin:* eczema, rashes, swollen lips and eyes

*Colic:* all babies cry, express distress, and are inconsolable at times. Colic is persistent distress and crying that lasts more than 3 hours per day, more than 3 days per week and for more than 3 weeks.

Please note: problems with a baby's digestion and skin can have many causes, which are not related to food allergy. Your health care team (GP, Health Visitor, Paediatrician) can help you decide if your baby is allergic to cow's milk. You should also ask them for a referral to see a paediatric dietitian who will help you with a milk free diet for you and your baby.

### How to eliminate milk from your diet:

A cow's milk free diet, means not eating or drinking cow's milk in all its forms (also called dairy products) including:

- *milk - whole, semi-skimmed, skimmed, dried, evaporated and condensed milk*
- *cheese*
- *yoghurt*
- *cream*
- *crème fraiche*
- *fromage frais*
- *ice-cream*
- *butter and most margarines.*

Check the ingredient list on the packaging of all your foods.

Food companies must clearly state in **bold** if their product contains milk. For example:

| INGREDIENTS   |
|---|
| Water, Carrots, Onions, Red Lentils (4.5%) Potatoes, Cauliflower, Leeks, Peas, Cornflower, <b>Wheat</b> flour, Cream ( <b>milk</b> ), Yeast Extract, Concentrated Tomato Paste, Garlic, Sugar, <b>Celery</b> Seed, Sunflower Oil, Herb and Spice, White Pepper, Parsley |
| ALLERGY ADVICE  |
| For allergens, see ingredients in <b>bold</b>   |

## Good nutrition for you:

Breastfeeding uses about 500 calories per day. This is roughly the same energy it takes to run 5 miles. You need to eat well to maintain a good milk supply.

### **Cow's milk substitutes:**

Milk, yogurt and cheese made from goats, sheep and other animals are not a good substitute for cow's milk, and usually cause the same symptoms. "Lacto-free" or "Lactose free" products are also not acceptable because they contain cow's milk protein. There are many calcium enriched plant milks, which you can drink instead (made from coconut, oat, soya, almond, etc). Try a few different types of plant milks to find out which ones you like. Make sure that your alternative milk is "**enriched**", which means they add calcium and vitamins. These milks should not be used as a drink for babies, but can be used for cooking and preparing their foods.

### **Milk free margarines, yogurts and cheese substitutes:**

Check the margarine fridge in your supermarket or health food store. There are lots of plant-based (cow's milk free) alternatives to normal margarine, yogurt and cheese.

**You should only follow a milk free diet if you are taking a calcium and vitamin D supplement.**

**Your supplement should contain at least 500mg of calcium and 400 IU of vitamin D.**

You will also need to have three servings per day of "high calcium" foods, or six servings per day of "moderate calcium" foods.

### **High calcium foods:**

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Enriched alternative milks (oat, soya, coconut, etc)  | <b>Serving size</b><br>200ml |
| Enriched alternative yogurts (soya, pea, oat, etc)    | 125g pot                     |
| Tinned sardines, salmon or pilchards (with the bones) | 100g or ½ tin                |

### **Moderate calcium foods:**

|              |                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Dried figs   | <b>Serving size</b><br>3 figs |
| Kidney beans | 4 heaped Tbsp                 |
| Spinach      | 100g                          |
| Brazil nuts  | 25g (7 whole nuts)            |
| Prawns       | 100g cooked                   |
| Orange       | 1 large                       |
| Sesame seeds | 30g (2 Tbsp)                  |
| Baked beans  | 200g (½ a large tin)          |

### **Reintroducing cows' milk:**

If a cow's milk free diet helps your baby's symptoms, continue the diet and speak to your health care team about when to reintroduce dairy products. **If you have cut out all dairy for 4 weeks, and there is no improvement in your baby's symptoms, you can stop the diet** to see if there is any effect on your baby. You may notice the effects right away, or several days later.

## **Good Nutrition for your baby:**

**All breastfed babies should be on a vitamin D and iron supplement from 6 months of age. Speak to your Health Visitor, GP or Dietitian if you would like more information.**

### **Artificial (formula) milk:**

If you decide to stop breastfeeding, hypoallergenic formulas are available on prescription.

### **Weaning**

When your baby is ready for solids (usually between 4-6 months of age) you must be careful not to give them foods containing cows' milk or dairy products. Check all ingredients carefully.

If you are having trouble balancing meals, if your baby's symptoms have returned, or if they are losing weight, call your paediatric dietitian for more help.

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