

Why a milk free diet?

Around 3% of children develop cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA). In most cases a strict cow's milk free diet is needed to treat the allergy. This information will help you avoid cow's milk whilst making sure your child gets all the nutrition they need to grow and develop well.

Which milk should be excluded?

All cow's milk including fresh, UHT, sterilised and dried milk should be avoided. The diet should be free of cow's milk protein (casein and whey) and milk sugar (lactose). Do not use other mammalian milks (from 4-legged animals such as goat, sheep, camel and buffalo) as their milk protein structure is similar to cow's milk and may still cause an allergic response.

Replacing cow's milk

Milk is an important source of nutrition for babies and children. If you are breastfeeding, ideally continue to do so when introducing cow's milk free solids. Breastfeeding mums may need to follow a milk free diet found at <https://frimley-healthiertgether.nhs.uk/professionals/feeding-pathways-supporting-information/milk-free-diet-breastfeeding-mums>

If your baby is taking an infant formula, it needs to be a special 'hypoallergenic' milk-free formula unless they are over the age of 1 in which case they can drink soya or oat milk in the growing up range.

- **Specialised infant formula**

Your baby may be prescribed a hypoallergenic formula such as Alimentum, Althera, Aptamil Pepti or Nutramigen LGG (or more rarely Elecare, Alfamino, Puramino or Neocate). They should use this as their main milk drink until 12 months old or as advised by your Health Care Professional. For babies over 6 months, who are not allergic to soya, Wysoy infant formula may be considered. This does not need to be prescribed as it is available to buy from pharmacies and larger supermarkets at a similar price to standard infant formula.

Most babies aged 6-12 months need approximately 600ml (20oz) formula each day to ensure they are meeting their nutritional needs, especially calcium. Over 1 year this amount reduces to around 350ml (12oz). These amounts vary according to the child and their diet.

- **Plant based alternatives to cow's milk for cooking**

Choose plant-based milks that are fortified with vitamins and minerals, in particular calcium and iodine. These are available to buy from most supermarkets and **can be used in cooking from six months of age but not as a main milk drink until your child is over one year old.** For example: soya, oat, nut (almond, cashew, coconut, hazelnut) or hemp milk. Brands include supermarket own label, Alpro growing up milk and the Oatly range. Rice milk should not be given to children under 4½ years old. Please note under the age of 2 only the growing up oat and soya ranges are nutritionally adequate.

Always choose a milk alternative that is fortified or enriched with calcium, they should provide at least 120mg of calcium /100mls. Not all organic versions have vitamins and minerals added – check the label. Please be aware that some milk alternatives may not be suitable for other allergies. Please discuss with your Health care professional or Dietitian if unsure.'

Foods to avoid

Avoid cow's milk and any products made from cow's milk such as yoghurt, cheese, custard, butter and margarine. Look for the list of ingredients printed on the package and avoid foods which have 'milk' in bold on the label. Choose dairy free, plant-based alternatives eg products in the Alpro, Oatly or Koko range, or supermarket own dairy-free brands. When eating out, food outlets need to provide allergy information by law, so always ask. Check with your Pharmacist about tablets or medicines which may contain milk proteins and/or lactose.

Introducing solids (weaning) For general weaning advice see the NHS website www.nhs.uk and type 'weaning'. For babies with a confirmed milk allergy, new research shows it could be beneficial to introduce foods containing peanuts and/or eggs, from 4 months. This should only happen if your baby is ready. This is because starting food earlier can protect some babies against developing more food allergies as they grow up. More information is available from the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology www.bsaci.org. If you live in Berkshire your GP can refer you to a Paediatric Dietician for further support.

Adapting Recipes ('Milk free recipe' leaflet at <https://frimley-healthiertgether.nhs.uk/professionals/feeding-pathways-supporting-information/milk-f>)

Many ordinary recipes can be adapted by using your milk alternative. Use a milk free margarine instead of butter, milk alternatives in place of milk, and soya/vegan cheese in place of ordinary cheese. Try making up batches of milk free meals/puddings and freezing them in ice-cube trays to allow you to serve small portions with less waste.

What about Calcium?

Calcium is needed for strong teeth and bones. Babies under 1 need 525mg/day and 1-3 years-old need 350mg/day.

- **Sources of Calcium (Approximate amounts. Portion sizes are not necessarily baby size!)**

Best source - Foods providing 250mg of calcium	Portion Size
Sardines – canned (including bones)	60g or half a tin
Calcium fortified milk alternatives	200ml
Foods providing 150mg of calcium	Portion Size
Fortified breakfast cereal (<i>check milk free</i>)	30g
Calcium fortified soya, coconut or oat yoghurt	125ml pot
Calcium fortified soya desert or custard	125ml pot
Foods providing 100mg of calcium	Portion Size
Tinned salmon	106g or half a tin
Scampi in breadcrumbs	100g
Baked beans / kidney beans	200g or half a tin
Calcium fortified bread	1 slice
Calcium fortified infant cereals	20g
Foods providing 50mg of calcium	Portion Size
White/wholemeal bread	1 slice
Pitta bread/chapatti	1 portion (65g)
Spring greens	75g
Tahini paste (sesame seed paste)	20g
Foods providing 25mg of calcium	Portion Size
Egg	1 medium
Hummus	50g
Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots	50g or 2 tablespoons
Orange	1 medium
Broccoli	85g (2 spears)

What about Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is needed by the body to absorb calcium and the best source is from the action of sunlight on the skin, however young children should not be exposed to the sun for long. Vitamin D is only found in a few foods, so a supplement is recommended for everyone.

Target group	Recommended supplement (SACN 2016)	Do not exceed
Breastfeeding mothers	Equivalent to 10 micrograms /day or 400IU	100 micrograms /day
Breastfed babies up to 12 months	Equivalent to 8.5-10 micrograms or 350-400IU	25 micrograms /day
Formula fed babies up to 12 months	Only if less than 500mls formula/day	25 micrograms /day
Ages 1-4 years	Equivalent to 10 micrograms /day 400IU	50 micrograms /day

NB micrograms (mcg) can also be written as µg.

A supplement containing vitamins A, C and D can be given from 6 months, rather than Vitamin D alone (Department of Health advice). This is a precaution because growing children may not get enough of these vitamins, especially those not eating a varied diet, such as fussy eaters. Vitamin supplements are available to purchase in pharmacies and supermarkets and are also available from the Healthy Start Scheme <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk>

Useful website for further help and practical tips: <http://www.cmpasupport.org.uk/>