

## Diagnosing CMPA see also: [NICE Guideline 116](#) , [iMAP](#) and [BSACI](#)

Cow's milk protein allergy is the most clinically complex individual food allergy and therefore causes significant challenges in both recognising the many different clinical presentations and also the varying approaches to management, both at primary care and specialist level. *To aid diagnosis, see also [Managing Unsettled Baby Pathway](#)*

### Take an Allergy-Focused Clinical History (adapted from iMAP 2019)

- Personal/family history of atopic disease (asthma/atopic dermatitis/allergic rhinitis) & food allergy
- Presenting symptoms and other symptoms that may be associated with CMPA (see below)
  - Age at first onset and speed of onset
  - Duration, severity and frequency
  - Setting of reaction (home, outside...)
  - Reproducibility of symptoms on repeated exposure
- Feeding history
  - Breast fed/formula fed (if breastfed, consider mother's diet)
  - Age of introduction to solids
  - If relevant, details of any foods avoided and why
- Details of previous treatment, including medication for presenting symptoms and response to this
- Any response to the elimination and reintroduction of foods

#### Delayed symptoms (2-72hrs) usually non IgE mediated Often several persisting symptoms

- 'Colic' / excessive crying
- 'Reflux' - GORD
- Blood in stool and/or mucus in otherwise well child
- Vomiting in irritable child with back arching & screaming
- Feed refusal or aversion
- Diarrhoea: often protracted + propensity to faltering growth
- Constipation: straining with defecation but producing soft stools, irregular or uncomfortable stools +/- faltering growth
- Unwell child: delayed onset protracted D&V  
*Wide range of severity, from well child with bloody stool to shocked child after profuse D&V ([FPIES](#))*

- Significant to severe atopic dermatitis +/- faltering growth

- 'Catarrhal' airway symptoms  
(Usually in combination with 1 or more other symptoms)

*Refer to secondary care only if symptoms are severe*

#### Acute symptoms (minutes) → Refer to secondary care

- Abdominal pain / Colic / excessive crying
- Vomiting (repeated or profuse)
- Diarrhoea (Rarely a severe presentation)

**GUT**  
Range of symptoms & severity

**SKIN**  
Range of symptoms & severity

- Urticaria
- Acute pruritus
- Angioedema
- Erythema
- Acute flaring of atopic dermatitis

**RESPIRATORY**  
Usually with other symptoms

- Red/itchy eyes
- Blocked/runny nose, sneezing
- Cough, wheeze, breathlessness

**SYSTEMIC**

- Drowsiness, dizziness, pallor, collapse
- **Anaphylaxis**