

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). Other mammalian milks are not suitable alternatives to cow's milk as their protein structure is similar and may still cause an allergic response. Therefore, do not use milks such as goats, sheep, camel and buffalo milk.

Replacing cow's milk

Milk is an important source of nutrition for babies and children. If you are breastfeeding, ideally continue to do so alongside introducing cow's milk protein free solids. This is because breastmilk can protect against developing other food allergies. Breastfeeding mothers should also follow a milk free diet (see 'Milk free diet for breastfeeding mothers').

If your baby is taking an infant formula, it needs to be a milk free formula.

Suitable infant formula free of cow's milk proteins

Your baby may have been prescribed an allergy formula such as Similac Alimentum, Althera, Nutramigen LGG, Aptamil Pepti, (or more rarely Alfamino, Puramino, Neocate or Pepti-Junior). They should continue this until 12 months or as advised by your Health Care Professional.

For babies over 6 months, Wysoy is a soya based infant formula to consider. 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) each day to ensure they are meeting their nutritional needs, especially Calcium. Over 1 year this amount reduces to around 350ml (12oz). These amounts do vary according to the child and their diet. Check with your Health Visitor or Dietitian if you have concerns about their calcium needs.

Other alternatives to cow's milk for cooking

Alternatives to milk that are fortified with calcium are available to buy from most supermarkets. They can be used in cooking from six months of age or as a main drink after one year old.

Examples include: Soya, Nuts (Almond, Coconut, Cashew, Hazelnut), Oat or Hemp milks. Brands include Supermarket's own range, Alpro range, Oatly range. Rice milk should **not** be given to children under 4.5 years old.

Always choose a milk alternative that is fortified or enriched with calcium – they should provide at least 120mg of calcium /100mls. Organic versions do not usually have calcium added – check the label.

Please be aware that some milk alternatives may not be suitable for other allergies and some may be low in calories, protein, calcium and/or other vitamins and minerals. Discuss with your Health Visitor or Dietitian if unsure.

Foods to avoid

Some of the foods to avoid are obvious. However, many other foods may contain cow's milk proteins and these should be avoided too. Look for the list of ingredients printed on the package and avoid foods which have 'milk' in bold on the label. When eating out, food outlets need to provide you 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)

Starting solids for a baby who has Cow's Milk Protein Allergy should be the same as for non-allergic baby, except of course you must not give any foods that contain cow's milk or dairy products (see list). Aim to start around six months, but not before four months (17 weeks). For general information on introducing solids, check the NHS choice website (www.nhs.uk) and type in 'weaning' into the search box.

Adapting Recipes

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, 1-3 year olds need 350mg/day.

Sources of Calcium (portion sizes are not necessarily baby size!)

Best source - Foods providing 250mg of Calcium	Portion Size
Sardines/pilchards – canned (including boned)	60g or half a tin
Soya cheese	55g
Tofu	50g
Calcium-enriched milk alternatives	200mls
Foods providing 150mg of Calcium	Portion Size
Curly Kale/spring greens	90g
Tahini paste (sesame seed paste)	20g (1 tsp)
Fortified milk free breakfast cereal	35g
Soya yoghurt/dessert	125ml pot
Foods providing 100mg of Calcium	Portion Size
Tinned salmon	115g or half a tin
Broccoli	90g
Baked beans / kidney beans	200g or half a tin
Foods providing 50mg of Calcium	Portion Size
White bread	60g (2 slices)
White flour products e.g. milk free hot cross buns	1
Cabbage	90g
Dried figs	20g or 1 dried
Foods providing 25mg of Calcium	Portion Size
Dried apricots	50g or small handful
Chapatti x 1	55g
Egg	1 medium
Hummus	50g
Dried fruit e.g. sultanas	50g or 2 tablespoons
White fish poached in water	170g
Wholemeal bread x 2 slices	60g

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 (<i>SACN 2016</i>)	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. Supplements are available to purchase in pharmacies and supermarkets, or may be available on prescription. Ask your Health Visitor or Dietitian for advice. Vitamins are also available from the Healthy Start Scheme.

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