

Lactose Free Diet

For babies



Some babies **temporarily** do not tolerate the natural milk sugar 'lactose' which is found in breastmilk and ordinary infant formula (made from cow's milk, and also in goat's and sheep's milk).

Lactose intolerance in infants is usually a short-term problem. It occurs most often following a bad bout of gastroenteritis (stomach bug) and can last for up to 2 - 4 months.

Lactose-free infant formulas are available such as SMA LF, Aptamil Lactose Free or Enfamil O-Lac. These taste similar to ordinary formulas and are available from pharmacies to buy. Until the age of 1, it is important your baby drinks at least 600ml (20 ounces) a day of a lactose-free formula to receive sufficient nutrients, especially calcium.

General advice for introducing solids (Although this will not be dairy free specific, more detailed information available at http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/documents/pdfs/introducing_solid_foods.pdf)

- Solid food should be introduced at **around 6 months** of age, when your baby shows signs that he/she is ready (sitting up, holding head, reaching for food...).
- First foods can include a wide range of simple, unprocessed foods (rice, oats, barley, semolina, peas, beans, lentils, meat, fish, eggs, ground nuts, fruit and vegetables).
- Babies progress at different paces. You can offer different consistencies: smooth, soft, mashed foods, or finger foods.
- Gradually increase the amount and range of foods to include foods from the 'allowed' list overleaf.
- Never add sugar or salt to your baby's food, and avoid processed foods (foods with more than a handful of ingredients on the label).
- Wheat, nuts, seeds, fish, shellfish, eggs and soya should not be introduced until 6 months of age.
- Never leave a baby unsupervised with foods.
- By 1 year of age, most infants can manage to eat chopped up family meals.

Can I give other drinks?

The main drink for your baby needs to be breastmilk and/or lactose-free formula. If other drinks are needed, cooled boiled water is the best drink to give. Baby juices are not necessary and they would just encourage your baby to have a sweet tooth. If your baby is constipated, a small amount of diluted pure fruit juice may help. Tea should not be given to babies and small children as it reduces iron absorption from your child's diet.

Milk substitutes to be used in cooking

If your baby is having a Lactose Free formula, these can be used in cooking. Alternatively soya, oat, hemp or nut milks can be used in cooking (as long as they are calcium enriched and not used as a main drink until 1 year of age). Please note rice milk is **not** recommended for babies and children under 5 years.

Lactose and cheese

Lactose is found in soft cheeses e.g. cream cheese and cheese spreads, mozzarella, feta. However, due to the maturing process of hard cheese, most of the lactose has been removed. Therefore, hard cheeses such as cheddar and Edam are usually tolerated on a lactose-free diet.

Check labels:

All milk-containing products must now clearly state 'milk' in the ingredient panel on the label. Most supermarkets will provide a list of milk free foods.

	Lactose free Foods	Foods to avoid or check labels for 'milk' in the ingredient list
Fruit and Vegetables	All plain vegetables and fruit – puréed, mashed and finger foods Fruit mixed with dairy-free alternative to custard, cream	Vegetables mixed with sauces made from cow's milk Fruit mixed with ordinary yogurt/custard/cream/ice-cream
Meat/fish/eggs/pulses/nuts*	Plain meat/fish/eggs/pulses/nuts/quorn/tofu	Processed Meat/ fish/ eggs/ pulses/ nuts products Or in sauces made from cow's milk Some meat alternative (Vegetarian) products
Dairy Products	Lactose-free infant formula Lacto-free brand products (can be used in cooking from 6 months) Dairy-free yogurts and desserts Hard cheese e.g. Cheddar, Edam	Cow's, goat's and sheep's milk and all products made from these Ordinary yogurts Soft cheese e.g. cheese spreads, cream cheese, mozzarella...
Starchy Foods	Bread (if no milk added) and Flour Potatoes, sweet potatoes Pasta, Rice Breakfast cereals (check label)	Bread, brioche Pasta in cow's milk based sauces Breakfast cereals which contain milk/chocolate
Others	Any oils, lard, dripping Dairy-free margarine e.g. Pure™, Vitalite™, Tomor™, Flora dairy-free, supermarket own dairy-free brand Biscuits/cakes if milk-free	Butter, ordinary margarine Ice-cream, cream Milk chocolate, chocolate spread Biscuits/cakes that contain milk
Baby Jars/Packets	All baby jars/packets/rusks which do not have 'milk' in the ingredient list	All baby jars/packets/rusks which have 'milk' in the ingredient list

*consistency given appropriate to age

How long does my baby need a lactose-free diet?

Most babies grow out of lactose intolerance once their gut has recovered.

To test this, try giving **small** amounts of dairy products e.g. ordinary yogurt or food made from cow's milk. If your baby has loose nappies **and** is unsettled, stop lactose-containing foods and try again in 1 - 2 weeks. It will take a bit of time for your baby to regain his/her ability to digest lactose, so increase the amount **gradually**.

If your child is still lactose intolerant at 1 year of age, please ask your Health Visitor/GP to refer her/him to a registered Dietitian.

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
<i>Breastfeeding mothers</i>	Equivalent to 10 micrograms /day or 400IU	100 micrograms /day
<i>Breastfed babies up to 12 months</i>	Equivalent to 8.5-10 micrograms or 350-400IU	25 micrograms /day
<i>Formula fed babies up to 12 months</i>	Only if less than 500mls formula/day	25 micrograms /day
<i>Ages 1-4 years</i>	Equivalent to 10 micrograms /day 400IU	50 micrograms /day

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