

Introducing Lactose-free solids

This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make the recommended changes to your baby's diet. If you need more detailed advice or if your baby is following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please ask your doctor to refer your child to a registered dietitian.

Some babies **temporarily** do not tolerate the natural milk sugar 'lactose' which is found in ordinary infant formula (made from cow's milk) and breastmilk (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 0-Lac. These taste similar to ordinary formulas and are available from chemists to buy.

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 milk-free solids

More information at 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 pureed or mashed foods, or offer 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.

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 and therefore, hard cheeses such as cheddar and Edam are usually tolerated on a lactose-free diet.

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.

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	Lactose free Foods	Foods to avoid
Fruit and Vegetables	All plain vegetables and fruit – puréed, mashed and finger foods Vegetables mixed with sauces made from milk substitutes All plain 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	Plain meat/fish/eggs/pulses or in sauce made with lactose-free milk	Meat/fish/eggs/pulses in sauces made from cow's milk
Dairy Products	Lactose-free infant formula, Dairy-free yogurts and desserts, dairy-free milk alternatives can be used in cooking 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) Flour Pasta in milk-free sauces Rice Breakfast cereals (if no milk in ingredients) with lactose free formula e.g. Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Weetabix Biscuits/cakes if milk-free	Bread with milk added Pasta in cow's milk based sauces Breakfast cereals which contain milk/ chocolate Biscuits/cakes that contain milk
Others	Fats and oils, lard, dripping Dairy-free margarine e.g. Pure™, Vitalite™, Tomor™, Flora dairy-free, supermarket own dairy-free brand	Ice-cream, cream, Butter, ordinary margarine Milk chocolate, chocolate spread
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

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.

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.