



**DEPARTMENT OF ALLERGY & IMMUNOLOGY**  
**ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, MELBOURNE**

# COWS MILK ALLERGY

Cow's milk is one of the most common causes of food allergic reactions in children. At this time there is no treatment for food allergy. If your child is allergic to cows milk, strict avoidance of milk and all milk containing foods is the only way to prevent symptoms.

## Cow's Milk Alternatives

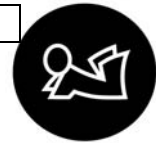
Milk is an excellent source of protein and calcium, therefore it is important to replace it with a suitable alternative to ensure adequate nutrition and growth. The most appropriate alternative will depend on your child's age.

Infant formula is usually based on cow's milk. Children under 1 year of age will require an alternative infant formula. Discuss the options with your doctor or dietitian.

<b>Partially Hydrolysed Infant Formulae</b> Nan HA, Karicare Sensikare, S26 HA	Not suitable for infants with established cows milk allergy.
<b>Soy Infant Formulae</b> Infasoy, Isomil, Karicare Soy	Reasonable first alternative for infants over 6mths of age Up to 40% of children who are allergic to cows milk will also be allergic to soy products.
<b>Extensively Hydrolysed and Amino Acid Based Infant Formulae</b> PeptiJunior, Alfare, Elecare, Neocate and Neocate Advance	Specialised Hypoallergenic formula only available on prescription from your doctor
<b>Sheep and Goats milk</b>	<b>Not</b> suitable for infants under 12 months <b>Not</b> a suitable alternative to cows milk because they contain a similar protein to that found in cows milk and could result in similar symptoms.
<b>Soy Milk</b>	<b>Not</b> suitable for infants under 12 months Suitable for older children (1-2yrs) if soy is tolerated. Ensure you are using a brand with added calcium.
<b>Rice Milk</b>	<b>Not</b> suitable for infants under 2 years Usually well tolerated if reactions to cows milk and soy. Low in fat and protein and need to use with caution in children under 2 years of age or children with slow growth. Ensure you are using a brand with calcium added.

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**Will my child grow out of their allergy?**

For the majority of children their cows milk allergy will resolve by 3-5 years of age. The doctors will determine whether your child has grown out of their allergy by a combination of skin testing and food challenge with milk. Skin tests may be repeated every 1-2 years. A positive skin test to milk does not always mean your child will have symptoms when they have milk or milk products, therefore a challenge may be the only way to determine if your child has grown out of their milk allergy. Challenges may need to be done in a hospital by experienced medical staff. Do not do challenges at home unless discussed with your doctor.

**What about calcium?**

If your child drinks less than 600ml/day of calcium fortified soy or rice milk, a calcium supplement may be required. A suitable supplement is **Sandocal** (1/2 effervescent tablet/day) providing 500mg.

**AVOIDING MILK**

	<b>Milk Free</b>	<b>Foods containing milk or likely to contain milk</b>
<b>Fruit and Vegetables</b>	All fresh dried and canned fruits and vegetables Fruit and vegetable juices	Commercial potato salad, mashed potato, instant potato
<b>Breads, Cereals and Grains</b>	Wheat, oats, rice and other grains Plain breakfast cereals such as Weetbix, Cornflakes, Rice Bubbles, Weeties etc Plain baby rice cereal  Most breads are milk free  Pasta, spaghetti, noodles, cous cous	Some muesli, chocolate flavoured cereals  Baby rusks Commercial mixed baby cereals and muesli  Bread containing milk products or cheese. Commercial garlic bread  Filled pasta eg spinach and ricotta Canned spaghetti and macaroni cheese
<b>Dairy</b>	Soy infant formula, soy milk (calcium fortified) Specialised infant formula  Most soy yoghurt (a milk based starter culture may be used which highly sensitive children may react to) Soy Custard	Cow's milk, reduced fat milk, skim milk, sheep and goats milk and regular and partially hydrolysed infant formula Lactose free milk Condensed milk, evaporated milk, buttermilk  Yoghurt, fruche, custard, yoghurt drinks, fermented milk drinks All cheeses including cheddar, ricotta, cream and cottage Most vegetarian or soy cheeses Ice cream, cream and sour cream

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		Check labels of sorbet, gelatin and ice confection
<b>Meat, chicken and fish and other protein foods</b>	All fresh and frozen meat, chicken and fish Canned fish in brine, oil or water Canned or dried beans and legumes. Tofu  Eggs  Plain baked beans  Fresh nuts, nut pastes and peanut butter	Check labels of crumbed and battered products Check labels of patties, burgers, sausages and meatloaf Check labels of processed meats and sandwich meats  Omelette, quiche, scrambled egg  Flavoured baked beans
<b>Cakes and Biscuits</b>	Homemade cakes, biscuits, muffins, slices and pancakes using milk free margarine and soy or rice milk  Most plain dry biscuits such as Salada, water crackers, rice crackers	Commercial cakes, biscuits, slices and pastries unless labelled milk free Waffles, pancakes and pikelets  Check labels of flavoured dry biscuits
<b>Sauces</b>	Vinegar based salad dressings such as French, Italian and Balsamic Homemade and commercial gravies Tomato sauce Soy sauce	Check labels of creamy salad dressings such as coleslaw, Caesar and mayonnaise Béarnaise sauce Tartare sauce Hollandaise sauce Béchamel, white or cheese sauce
<b>Soups</b>	Homemade soup without milk products	Creamed soups
<b>Jams and Spreads</b>	Vegemite, honey, jams, marmalade, peanut butter, golden syrup	Nuttela, cheese spread
<b>Lollies and Chips</b>	Plain potato and corn chips Popcorn  Hard boiled lollies, liquorice, chewing gum  Soy and dark chocolate	Check labels of flavoured chips and snacks  Check labels of soft jube/jelly style confectionary, caramels, fudge, butterscotch  White and milk chocolate
<b>Drinks</b>	Fruit and vegetable juices Soft drinks and cordials Flavoured toppings Cocoa	Milk shakes and flavoured milk drinks Chocolate drink powders (Quik, Milo, Ovaltine)

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		Malted milk powders Coffee creamers, whiteners and Coffee mixes Sustagen and other high protein drink powders
<b>Fats and Oils</b>	Cooking oils  Milk free margarines such as Nuttelex, Becel	Ghee, butterfat  Margarine and butter
<b>Other</b>	Tomato salsa dip, Hommus dip Stock cubes Herbs and spices	Check labels of commercial dips Pizza Yoghurt sauce on souvlaki, raita dip with Indian meals

### LABEL READING

#### **Ingredients List**

All packaged foods must have an ingredients list. You must check this ingredients list for any ingredients that may contain milk. Since 2002, it has been law that all potential food allergens (peanut, tree nut, seafood, fish, milk, eggs, soybeans and wheat) must be clearly identified, however small the amount.

Example: instead of simply casein the ingredients list should read casein (milk) or milk casein.

**ALWAYS** check the ingredients list every time you buy the food as the ingredients of the product may change.

#### **“May contain traces of milk” statements**

These statements are used by manufacturers to indicate that the product may be contaminated with milk through processing and packaging. At present these statements are voluntary and there are no clear guidelines for companies regarding how and when to use them. The wording of the statements makes it very difficult to determine the level of risk and a product that does not contain the statement may be no safer than a product that does. The chances of having a significant allergic reaction through contamination during processing is extremely unlikely. Most families choose to ignore these statements as the only safe alternative is to avoid all commercial food products in your child's diet.

### LACTOSE IN MEDICATIONS

Lactose is the sugar contained in cow's milk. The pure sugar form is used in medications. The chance of a person with milk allergy reacting to pure lactose in medications is very low.

### FOOD PREPARATION

Highly allergic children can have a mild reaction from foods contaminated with milk or from cooking surfaces and utensils contaminated with milk or milk containing foods.

November 2007

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