



Milk free diet for children with a milk allergy

This leaflet is for parents and carers of babies and children with a milk allergy. It explains how milk allergy can affect your child's health, how a diagnosis is made and how you can manage your child's diet to reduce their symptoms.

What is a milk allergy and who does it affect?

Allergy to milk occurs when the body's immune system reacts to the proteins present in cow's milk and other mammalian milks – such as sheep's and goat's milks (referred to as 'milk' throughout this leaflet).

Milk allergy is one of the most common allergies in babies and young children. It generally affects 2% to 6% of our young population¹. Most children grow out of a milk allergy by 5 years of age.



Symptoms associated with a milk allergy

Symptoms can be immediate or delayed depending on the type of milk allergy your child has.

Immediate type allergic symptoms:

The more immediate type allergic reactions appear very quickly (generally within minutes to 2 hours) or delayed (between 2-72 hours) after the baby has consumed anything containing milk. Sometimes, these reactions are first noticed when changing from breastfeeding to formula milk. Immediate type allergic reactions are also called "IgE mediated allergies". The term "IgE mediated" refers to the way the immune system reacts very quickly to any milk proteins consumed by a person with a milk allergy.

Immediate symptoms may include a combination of the following:

- swelling of the face, eyes or lips
- itchy skin rashes (redness or hives) anywhere on the body
- acute red rash on the face or other areas or flaring of eczema
- runny nose, itchy eyes
- coughing
- vomiting
- swallowing or breathing difficulties (rare)

Very rarely, a severe allergic reaction can lead to: Acute respiratory or circulatory symptoms resulting in your child becoming extremely unwell. If your child has a more severe reaction with breathing difficulties or reduced consciousness you should call an ambulance (999) immediately.

Delayed allergic symptoms may include a combination of the following:

A delayed type milk allergy can result in symptoms that take place several hours, or even 2 to 3 days, after consuming milk. This can make the allergy harder to diagnose. It is more common than the immediate IgE mediated allergy.

Delayed type allergic reactions are also called “Non IgE mediated allergies” because the immune system reacts more slowly to proteins from milk.

Delayed symptoms may include a combination of the following:

- diarrhoea – often with a sore bottom (nappy rash)
- constipation – often associated with excessive straining
- gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
- profuse vomiting
- abdominal pain, bloating or distension
- mucous and/or blood in the stools
- nausea
- painful wind, excess gas
- eczema
- food refusal/faltering growth

Diagnosing a milk allergy

It is important that food allergies are properly diagnosed by a healthcare professional with the relevant training. They will ask detailed questions about the symptoms, the history of any reactions, and may perform tests. The type of tests advised will depend on how the patient has reacted.

- **Immediate onset allergic reactions are known as IgE mediated allergy.** Skin prick tests or blood tests measuring IgE antibodies may be used to help with the diagnosis. The results of these tests are often difficult to interpret, which is why it is essential that they are carried out and read by a qualified allergy specialist. Sometimes, a food challenge may be needed before a definite diagnosis can be made. This is when increasing amounts of the suspected food are given and symptoms monitored. This is usually done under supervision in the hospital setting and should not be done at home unless you have been advised it is safe to do so by an allergy specialist.
- **Delayed onset allergic reactions are known as non-IgE mediated allergy.** There are no reliable skin or blood tests that can diagnose this type of allergy. The only reliable way to make a diagnosis is to take the suspected food(s)/milk out of the diet for a trial period of 2-6 weeks to see if the symptoms get better. The food(s)/milk are then reintroduced to see if the symptoms return. **The reintroduction stage is important as there may be other reasons why your child’s symptoms improved.** Your dietitian will give you further advice on how to do this.

Other tests:

Patch testing is **not recommended** to diagnose food allergy as it is not reliable. It is not recommended by any official body as a test for delayed onset of food allergy. Patch testing may be used by specialists to diagnose contact allergies not related to food, e.g. allergy to cosmetics.

Some companies offer allergy or food intolerance tests that measure IgG antibodies. These are not a reliable way to diagnose delayed or immediate reactions. Other tests, such as hair analysis, kinesiology testing and vega testing, have also been found not to be reliable and have no scientific basis. They are not recommended.

Is milk protein allergy the same as lactose intolerance?

A milk allergy is different to lactose intolerance. It occurs when the body cannot digest lactose, a type of sugar in milk.

The most common form of lactose intolerance is called “secondary lactose intolerance”. This can occur after a bout of gastroenteritis (stomach bug) or because of an inflamed gut, such as Coeliac disease. Secondary lactose intolerance is temporary and resolves when the gut heals. In very rare cases, babies are born with lactose intolerance that is not temporary. It is usually identified at birth and requires strict lifelong avoidance of lactose. Some people develop lactose intolerance later in childhood or adulthood but can often tolerate small amounts of lactose.

Symptoms of lactose intolerance:

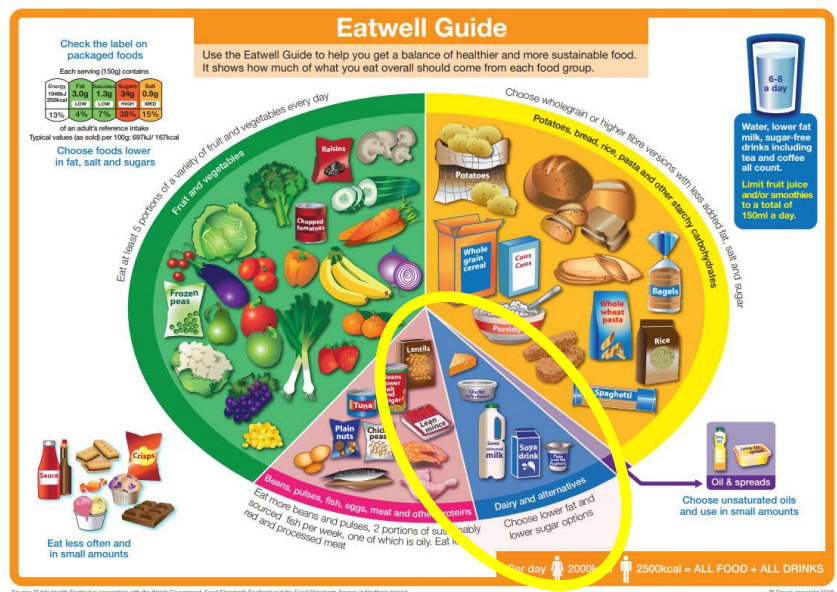
- diarrhoea or constipation– often with a sore bottom (nappy rash)
- abdominal bloating or distension
- nausea
- wind, excess gas
- colicky stomach pain

Lactose intolerance is treated by following a low lactose diet. Most children with lactose intolerance can manage to eat some low lactose foods (e.g. hard cheese, butter and yogurt) and even small amounts of milk, without symptoms. It is important to discuss with your dietitian which foods containing milk your child can tolerate.

A milk free diet for your child

A milk free diet is completely free of cow and other mammalian milks and excludes both milk proteins and lactose (milk sugar). This means **excluding all milk and all foods made from milk, like cheese and yoghurts and regular baby formula** from your child’s diet, as well as **avoiding all manufactured products containing milk.**

We know that milk and dairy products provide essential nutrients including calcium for bone health. Before starting a milk free diet, we recommend your child is reviewed by their paediatrician or paediatric dietitian to make sure that their diet is balanced and full of the nutrients they need for the best possible start.



Milk substitutes for babies and young children

- **Advice for breastfeeding mums:** Breastfeeding provides the best source of nutrition for babies with a milk allergy. It provides all the nourishment that a young baby needs, as well as important benefits for your baby's immune system and digestion. The nutrients in breast milk are easily digested and absorbed and the composition of your milk continually changes to meet your baby's needs at different stages of their development.

If your baby has been diagnosed with a milk allergy and has ongoing allergic symptoms (for example diarrhoea or eczema) whilst still being exclusively breastfed, you may be advised to exclude milk from your own diet. This should only be done after discussion with your doctor or dietitian, as it is important that mums who breastfeed, also have a healthy balanced diet, with adequate amounts of calcium to meet their own needs and those of the baby. A calcium supplement is required if you are excluding milk and dairy products from your diet whilst breastfeeding². A calcium supplement containing 1000mg calcium is recommended.

If you decide to stop breastfeeding and they are under 1 year of age, then specialist milk free formula is required, which your pediatrician or doctor will prescribe for you.

- **Advice for formula fed babies:** All babies under age 1 year with a milk allergy will need a specialist milk free formula on prescription. The best milk replacement for your child will depend on their age, the type of allergy symptoms they have experienced and their taste preferences. Your child's dietitian will be able to advise on which specialist milk free formula is best for them.

Specialist infant formula is available on prescription for infants aged 0-12 months. By the time they are one year old, infants will be eating a varied diet and are less reliant on milk as their main food source. See page 5 for advice on weaning and suitable milks once over one year old.

There are several specialist milk free formulas and milk substitutes available:

Age	Type of milk	Examples of milks
From birth – 1 year	Prescription: Extensively Hydrolysed Formulas The milk proteins in these formulas have been pre-digested or 'broken down' into smaller parts called peptides which are tolerated by over 90% of milk allergy sufferers.	Althera [®]
		Aptamil Pepti 1 [®] 1 (0-6 months) Aptamil Pepti 2 [®] (after 6 months)
	Prescription: Amino Acid Formulas The milk proteins in these formulas have been digested down to their most basic building blocks called amino acids, which do not trigger allergic reactions. This type of formula is recommended for those with more severe forms of milk allergy.	Nutramigen 1 LGG [®] (0-6 months) Nutramigen 2 LGG [®] (after 6 months)
		SMA Alfamino [®] Nutramigen Puramino [®] Neocate LCP [®] Neocate Syneo [®]
Soya Formula has now been discontinued in the UK so this is no longer an option for babies with a milk allergy.		

Age	Type of milk	Examples of milks
From 1 year	<p>Soya milk If not allergic to soya, from age 6 months, you can use soya milk and soya products in your baby’s weaning diet but do not use as a main milk drink until over 1 year.</p> <p>Other plant milks (if soya and milk allergic but growing well and eating a balanced diet) – note they all contain calcium and iodine.</p>	<p>Alpro Growing Up Soya Drink®</p> <p>Coconut: Koko Dairy Free Super Drink</p> <p>Oat: <u>Alpro Oat Growing Up Drink®</u> <u>Oatly Oat Drink Whole®</u> <u>Oatly Barista Edition®</u></p>

Other animal milks, e.g. goat, sheep, buffalo...

Other mammalian milks like goat, sheep etc, are **not** suitable for children with milk allergy as they have similar allergenic proteins to cow’s milk.



Milk protein and soya allergies

There is roughly a 50:50 chance that a child with a milk protein allergy will also react to soya. For this reason, we recommend being careful if introducing soya-based foods into the weaning diet. These foods include soya yoghurts and desserts. Foods containing soya as a minor ingredient (e.g. breads and dairy free chocolates) are generally tolerated, but some sensitive babies can react to them also. Ask your dietitian for advice if you are unsure about trialling soya in your child’s diet.

Some top tips that can help when introducing milk substitutes

- ✓ Many milk substitutes have a very different taste and smell compared with breast milk, regular baby formula or mammalian milk. Try introducing the new formula gradually over several days by mixing it with the child’s usual formula or expressed breast milk, increasing the amount of new formula a little each time.
- ✓ It can take time for some babies and children to get used to the taste of a new product so keep trying if they refuse to drink it at first.
- ✓ Try adding a drop of pure vanilla extract to hide the taste and smell of the new formula.
- ✓ If continuing to breastfeed, try using the new formula in weaning foods wherever possible so that the baby gets used to the taste.



Checking the labels – always read food ingredient labels carefully

Food allergen labelling law requires that common food allergens used as ingredients or processing aids must be declared on the packaging or at the point of sale. The list of 14 common food allergens includes milk. It is important that you check the labels of all foods and drinks given to your child to ensure they are milk free. Do this every time as recipes often change between different products, brands and batches.

Be careful when choosing unlabelled food and drink such as bread, pastries and ‘delicatessen’ foods. Ask at the counter for details about what the products contain to be sure they are milk free. Milk free foods may also be referred to as being ‘dairy free’.



Other words used to describe ‘milk’ – if ANY of the following ingredients are listed, avoid the product:

✗ Buttermilk	✗ Casein (curds), Caseinates	✗ Milk protein
✗ Cow’s milk (fresh, UHT)	✗ Calcium or Sodium caseinate	✗ Milk sugar
✗ Condensed milk	✗ Hydrolysed casein	✗ Milk solids, non-fat milk solids
✗ Cream/Artificial cream	✗ Hydrolysed whey protein	✗ Modified milk
✗ Evaporated milk	✗ Lactoglobulin	✗ Whey, Whey solids, Hydrolysed whey
✗ Butter, butter oil	✗ Lactoalbumin	✗ Whey protein, whey syrup sweetener
✗ Ghee	✗ Lactose	✗ Animal milks (e.g. goat’s or sheep’s milk)
✗ Margarine	✗ Milk powder, skimmed milk powder	
✗ Cheese		
✗ Fromage Frais		
✗ Ice-cream		
✗ Yoghurt		

What do ‘May contain’ or ‘Made in a factory’ labelling statements mean?

This statement is often used on food packaging to explain that a food may be contaminated with a common allergen, including milk. It is recommended that you avoid these food and drinks when following a milk free diet. **Remember, if in doubt, leave it out!**



Allergy alerts

Sometimes, foods are withdrawn or recalled. There may be a risk to customers because the allergy labelling is missing, wrong or if there is any other food allergy risk. You can get these alerts from the Food Standards Agency website. It is also possible to subscribe to a free email or SMS text message alert system to receive messages when Allergy Alerts are issued. To subscribe, go to: www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/subscribe

Alternatively, you can view product alerts online from: www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/information-training/allergy-alerts/

Cross contamination

Cross contamination can happen while preparing foods. If traces of milk need to be avoided, ensure that all work surfaces and chopping boards are well cleaned, or use separate chopping boards. Use separate containers for jams, butter etc and use clean utensils for serving them. High-risk situations where cross contamination can take place include: barbecues, buffets, deli-counters and self-service salad bars. Pre-packed sandwiches are also a risk for cross contamination and are best avoided.



To choose or not to choose

The information below is a guideline. Please note that foods listed were milk free at the time of publishing. Please continue to check labels as product content may change.

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Milk and dairy foods	<p>Milk alternatives Breast milk or specialist formula for cow's milk protein allergy.</p> <p>These can be added to weaning diet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oat milk, soya milk, pea milk, coconut milk, quinoa milk, hemp milk, nut milk. Plant based milks should not be used as a drink before 12 months. Rice milk should not be used under 4½ years. Cream alternatives made with oat, rice and coconut. 	<p>Milk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cows' milk-based baby and follow on formulas. Cow's milk comfort formula for example Cow & Gate Comfort. Lactose-free formulas. Lacto-free range of milks, cheese and yoghurts – these are only suitable for babies with lactose intolerance as they contain cow's milk proteins. Soya formula is not recommended for babies under 6 months. Rice milk is not recommended for children under 4½ years of age. Cow's milk – all kinds including whole, skimmed, A2, dried, UHT, evaporated, condensed, flavoured milk, coffee compliment, whitener. Goat/sheep/other animal milk. Milkshakes including milk-based smoothies. Cream, creme fraiche and synthetic cream toppings.
	<p>Cheese alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soya, coconut or almond based dairy free cheeses, including hard cheese, cream cheese, mozzarella style. 	<p>Cheese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All types, for example hard cheese, cheese strings, cheese spread, cream cheese, cottage cheese, quark, vegetarian cheese and sauces/dishes that include cheeses. Lactose free cheese. Pizza with cheese toppings.

	<p>Yoghurts and desserts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soya yoghurts and desserts. • Oat milk-based yoghurts and desserts Coconut milk-based yoghurts and desserts. • Nut based yogurts. <p>Ice creams made with soya, coconut, pea and nut.</p>	<p>Yoghurts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All types for example natural and fruit yoghurts, baby yoghurts, fromage frais, yoghurt drinks and lactose free yogurts. <p>All types of ice cream, buttermilk, lactose free ice creams.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Fruits and vegetables</p>	<p>Foods to choose</p>	<p>Foods to avoid</p>
	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh, frozen, tinned and dried, e.g. stewed apples, mashed banana, pears tinned in their own juice. <p>Vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh and frozen vegetables, tinned or dried, e.g. home-cooked (no salt), pureed and mashed vegetables. <p>Always check that baby fruit / vegetable purees are milk free.</p>	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit yogurts, fools and mousses, chocolate and yogurt coated dried fruit, fruit pies, fruit in batter, fruit served with cream, caramel and chocolate sauces. <p>Vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable pies, vegetables cooked with butter or white/cheese sauce.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods</p>	<p>Foods to choose</p>	<p>Foods to avoid</p>
	<p>Cereals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porridge and milk free baby breakfast cereals labelled milk free. • Flour, cornflour. • Barley, oats, bran, wheatgerm, cous cous. • Plain popcorn. <p>Bread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal or white bread/rolls/pitta/ breadsticks containing no milk ingredients. • Oat cakes and crackers. <p>Pasta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All plain pasta, e.g. pasta shapes and macaroni. • Wheat noodles, plain cous cous. <p>Rice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain boiled rice and rice cakes. • Plain wheat, rice and egg noodles. <p>Potatoes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiled, baked, chips and roasted made without milk – boiled, baked, roast, chips, potato wedges. 	<p>Cereals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby cereals, cereals containing milk such as Alpen, baby biscuits and rusks containing milk powder. <p>Bread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croissants, brioche, pancakes, fruit loaves, pastry, pizza and most bakery items. <p>Pasta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filled pasta, oasta with cream or cheese-based sauces, e.g. macaroni cheese. • Canned pasta in tomato sauce. • Dried pasta in sauces. <p>Rice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice pudding. <p>Potatoes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mashed potatoes with milk, marg or butter. • Potato products such as ready-made/instant mash, croquettes and baked potato products.

	<p>Remember if mashing use milk substitute and milk free margarine. Plain and salted crisps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potatoes with cream or cheese-based sauces, e.g. potato dauphinoise. • Flavoured potato crisps.
Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein	<p>Foods to choose</p> <p>Meat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All unprocessed meats including beef, chicken, lamb, pork and turkey. <p>Fish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fresh and frozen unprocessed fish including tinned tuna and salmon and milk free fish fingers. <p>Non-meat proteins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-dairy sources of protein – beans, peas, lentils, tofu, soya, Quorn and hummus. <p>Eggs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All eggs fresh and unprocessed. • Plain cooked egg including boiled, poached, scrambled or omelette. 	<p>Foods to avoid</p> <p>Meat or fish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those cooked with milk, cream and cheese sauce. • Sausages, hot dogs, processed cold meats, meat pies, pork pies, Scotch eggs, battered chicken, breaded and battered fish, meat spreads, pastes and pates – <i>these foods may contain milk, therefore check the labels.</i> • Any meat and fish served with a butter, milk or cheese sauce. <p>Non-meat proteins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorn-based products – <i>these foods may contain milk, therefore check the labels.</i> <p>Eggs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrambled egg/ omelette made with dairy milk/butter/cheese, quiche.
	<p>Foods to choose</p> <p>Fat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy free margarine and spreads. • Pure fats, oils, lard suet, dripping. • Kosher and vegan spreads. • Soya margarine. 	<p>Foods to avoid</p> <p>Fat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, shortening, margarine, low cholesterol margarine, low fat spread, ghee.
Foods and drinks high in fat and/or		

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
	<p>Desserts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemade desserts made with milk substitute and milk free margarine. • Coconut and soya yoghurts and desserts • Custards, rice pudding, semolina made with milk substitute. <p>Non-dairy ice creams made with Soya, coconut, pea and nut.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juice based ice lollies. • Sugar, jam, jelly and honey (not under 1 year). <p>Biscuits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk free biscuits, oatcakes and crackers. <p>Chocolate: Dairy free soya/rice/carob-based chocolates (but beware of milk traces – check labels).</p> <p>Drinks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water (tap water should be boiled and cooled if given to babies under 6 months), baby fruit juices and flavoured waters at mealtimes. • Pure fruit juices. • Diluted juice. 	<p>Desserts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those containing milk and milk products, e.g. yoghurt, mousses, milk puddings, ice cream, instant custard, trifle, fromage frais, yogurts, cakes. • Baby desserts based on milk or yoghurt. <p>Biscuits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those containing milk or milk products, e.g. baby biscuits, shortbreads, chocolate biscuits. • Bakery products made with ordinary margarine, butter or containing milk. • Cheesy snacks. <p>Chocolate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate containing milk, chocolate spreads, toffee, fudge, butterscotch. <p>Drinks: Horlicks, Ovaltine, instant hot chocolate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milkshakes made from cow's/goat's/sheep's milk.

These tables are adapted from NDRi Milk-Free Weaning booklet and FASG of BDA- cow's milk free diet for infants.

How much calcium is enough?

Calcium is a mineral that is essential for good bone health, as well as keeping teeth, nerves and muscles healthy. It is important for everyone to get enough calcium from their diet and the richest sources are usually milk and dairy products.


Babies and children with milk allergy and breastfeeding mums who have to exclude dairy products from their diets need to get enough calcium from their dairy free diet.

How much calcium is needed? ★ Check the age of your child and the number of calcium stars they need each day and then use the table to find some good examples of calcium-rich foods to enjoy.

Age	Calcium requirements	Calcium stars (1 ★ equals 60 mg)
Babies (0-12 months)	525 mg/day	9 stars
1-3 years	350 mg/day	6 stars
4-6 years	450 mg/day	7½ stars
7-10 years	550 mg/day	9 stars
Males: 11-18 years	1000 mg/day	16½ stars
Females: 11-18 years	800 mg/day	13 stars
19 years and over	700 mg/day	12 stars
Breastfeeding mums	1,250mg / day	20 stars

Milk free sources of calcium

Here are some examples of milk free calcium rich foods and drinks with the nutritional information. This is intended only as a guideline – it is important to check the labels as ingredients and recipes do change.

Examples of milk free calcium rich foods and drinks	Quantity	Calcium (mg)	Calcium stars ★
Specialist baby formula			
Specialist (prescription) dairy free first formula milks (0-6 months)	100ml / 3oz	50 – 70mg	★
Specialist (prescription) dairy free follow on formula milks (6 months onwards)	100ml / 3oz 	60 – 95mg	★

Examples of milk free calcium rich foods and drinks	Quantity	Calcium (mg)	Calcium stars ☆
Alternative dairy products			
Calcium enriched milk alternatives made from soya, oat, coconut, nut, pea,	200ml (1/3 pint)	240mg	☆☆☆☆
Calcium fortified soya or coconut yoghurt, desserts and custards ()	100g	90-160mg	☆☆
Calcium fortified cheese alternative Cream cheese™	30g (match box size)	60-220mg	☆ - ☆☆☆☆
Breads and cereals			
Fortified bread	1 medium slice (38g-50g)	140-180mg	☆☆☆
Chapatti / Pitta bread	1 small (60g)	90mg	☆☆
White / Wholemeal bread	1 medium slice (40g)	53-78mg	☆
Fortified cereals,	1 medium portion (30g)	136-174	☆☆-☆☆☆
Protein sources			
Tinned sardines with bones	½ tin (60g)	273-407mg	☆☆☆☆
Tinned pilchards with bones	60g	150mg	☆☆
Tinned salmon with bones	½ tin (52g)	56 - 85mg	☆
Whitebait	50g	430mg	☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
Scampi in breadcrumbs	6 pieces (90g)	190mg	☆☆☆
Beans and lentils			
Baked beans**	2 tbsp (80g)	42mg	☆
Lentils (cooked)**	5 tbsp (200g)	30mg	½
Red kidney beans**	2 tbsp (60g)	43mg	☆
Soya beans**	2 tbsp (60g)	50mg	☆
Soya bean curd/tofu. Only if set with calcium chloride (E509) or calcium sulphate (E516), not nigari	60g	200mg	☆☆☆
Fruits and vegetables			
Broccoli (boiled)	2 spears (135g)	34mg	☆
Curly kale	1 medium portion (70g)	56mg	☆
Spring cabbage	1 medium portion (90g)	50mg	☆
Spinach (boiled)**	2 tbsp (90g)	145mg	☆☆ ½
Okra (stir fried)	1 medium portion (60g)	132mg	☆☆
Watercress	½ bunch (40g)	68mg	☆

Examples of milk free calcium rich foods and drinks	Quantity	Calcium (mg)	Calcium stars ★
Currants**	2 heaped tbsp (50g)	47mg	★
Dried mixed fruit**	3 tbsp (75g)	54mg	★
Dried figs**	2 dried figs (40g)	100mg	★★
Dried apricots**	8 dried apricots (66g)	60mg	★
Orange	1 medium (160g)	75mg	★
Miscellaneous			
Almonds or Brazil nuts/nut butters (under 5 year olds should avoid whole nuts)**	1 handful/portion (30g)	72mg	★

This table has been adapted from The British Dietetic Association: Cow's Milk Free Diet for Infants and Children (2024)

* Children under 4½ years old should not have rice drinks as a replacement for cow's milk, breast milk or infant formula.

****Note:** Spinach, dried fruits, beans, seeds and nuts are not good sources of calcium. This is because they contain oxalates and/or phytates, which reduce how much calcium your body can absorb. You should not rely on them as your main sources of calcium.

Top tips:

- ✓ Your child needs three servings per day of milk substitute; milk free yoghurt and/or milk free milk-style pudding like milk free custard or milk free rice pudding to meet their calcium requirements.
- ✓ Organic milk alternatives such as soya, oat and nut based milks may not be fortified with calcium. Always check the label. In the UK, flour, bread and cereals are also fortified with calcium. Read the labels to ensure they do not also contain any milk.

Calcium supplements

If your child struggles to meet their calcium requirements from the milk free alternatives, a calcium supplement may be recommended. Please speak to your child's dietitian or paediatrician for more information.

Iodine

Milk is a good source of iodine, which is needed for the development of a baby's brain during pregnancy and early life. It is important that a milk free diet contains other iodine rich foods, such as iodine fortified plant milks and/or fish. If your child is unable to eat fish/have an iodine enriched milk substitute, your dietitian can advise on other suitable iodine containing foods or supplements if needed. The following table shows how much is needed for each age group, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO):

Age	Iodine/day (ug)	Age	Iodine/day (ug)
0-5 years	90	Pregnancy	250
6-12 years	120	Breastfeeding mums	250
Adults over 12 years	150		

Further information on foods containing iodine can be found at:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/iodine.html>

Vitamin and mineral supplements

Vitamin D Revised daily recommendations from the UK Health Department:

- All breastfed babies should take a vitamin D containing supplement from birth
- Formula fed babies are likely to obtain enough vitamin D if drinking 600ml infant formula daily. If drinking less than this, a vitamin D containing supplement should be given.
- The following amounts are recommended:
 - Babies under 1 year of age: 8.5-10 micrograms (340-400IU) vitamin D
 - Everyone over 1 year of age (including pregnant and breastfeeding mothers): 10 micrograms (400IU) vitamin D.

If you receive income support, you can obtain Healthy Start vitamin drops from your local baby clinic or health visitor or your GP may prescribe a vitamin supplement. Otherwise, a children's vitamin containing vitamin D can be purchased from the chemists and supermarkets. Ask your pharmacist for advice if you are unsure which supplement to buy.

Recipes*

Milk free custard (2 servings)

Ingredients

2 rounded teaspoons of custard powder
200ml (7oz) of formula milk substitute, or Oat or soya milk

Method

1. Mix the custard powder with a few teaspoons of milk substitute in a bowl, making sure there are no lumps.
2. Add the milk substitute to the bowl.
3. Pout into a small pan and stir or whisk over a medium heat until the custard thickens and just comes to boil.
4. Can serve with mashed banana or stewed apples.



Milk free white sauce

Ingredients

300ml (10oz) milk substitute
2 rounded teaspoons cornflour

Method

Method as for milk free custard above. Season with a little pepper. Can be served with chicken, pasta and mixed vegetables.



Milk free rice pudding

Ingredients

3 rounded tablespoons flaked rice
300ml (10oz) of milk substitute

Method

1. Place all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to boil.
2. Simmer for approximately 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until thickened. Add more milk substitute if too thick.



Chicken and vegetable risotto (3-4 servings)

Ingredients

- 1 chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large mug long grain rice
- ½ litre of hot chicken stock made with a stock cube
- 300g cooked chicken
- 200g canned sweetcorn
- A handful of frozen peas








Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onion, stirring until soft.
 2. Add the rice and stock to the pan, stir once and simmer for 15 minutes
- Stir in chicken, sweetcorn and peas and cook for a further 10 minutes. Season with pepper and serve!

**These recipes have been taken from NDRi Milk Free Zone and Milk Free Weaning booklets.*

What my milk free day might look like

<p>Breakfast: Cow's milk free cereal with milk substitute, or, Toast and milk free margarine and jam. Piece of fresh fruit.</p> 	<p>Mid-afternoon: Cow's milk free biscuits with a glass of milk substitute. Vegetable sticks with milk free dip, such as hummus.</p> 
<p>Mid-morning: Milk free yoghurt, e.g. plant based yoghurt. Piece of fresh fruit.</p>  	<p>Evening meal: Meat, chicken, fish, egg or milk free vegetarian dish with potato, pasta, rice or bread and vegetables. e.g. Chicken and vegetable risotto (<i>recipe included</i>). Pudding: Rice pudding made with milk substitute.</p> 

Lunch:

Meat, chicken, fish, egg or milk free vegetarian dish with potato, pasta, rice or bread and vegetables.

e.g. Chicken and vegetable risotto (*recipe included*).

Pudding: Stewed apple and custard made with milk substitute.



Pre-bed:

Glass of milk substitute.



Further information: useful websites

- British Dietetics Association Food Facts sheets: [Milk allergy - British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](#)
- Allergy UK: [Cow's Milk Allergy | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)
- Anaphylaxis Campaign: <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk>

Online shopping

www.amyskitchen.co.uk Wheat and gluten free meals and soups

www.kirstys.co.uk Allergy free ready meals.

www.goodnessdirect.co.uk

Product websites

www.alpro.com Soya, oat and nut milks.

www.buteisland.com Milk free cheeses.

www.coconutsecret.com Coconut based products.

www.coconutco.co.uk Coconut yogurts and ice cream.

www.coyo.com Coconut milk based ice cream and yogurt.

www.granovita.co.uk & www.plamilfoods.co.uk Milk and egg free mayonnaise.

www.kokodairyfree.com Coconut based milks, yoghurts and cheeses.

www.moofreechocolates.com Milk free chocolates (some contain soya lecithin so check labels).

www.mozzarisella.co.uk Rice based cheeses.

www.orgran.com Egg, dairy, wheat, gluten and yeast free products & egg replacer.

www.plamilfoods.co.uk Milk free products.

www.purefreefrom.co.uk Milk free margarines.

www.vbitesfoods.com Milk free cheeses.

www.vegusto.co.uk Milk free cheese (nut based) and vegan products.

www.violife.gr Milk and egg free cheeses.

Online product finder service

www.spoon.guru This app helps you to find 'free from' products and you can:

- filter products by ingredients you want to avoid
- find products with ingredients you want to include
- discover allergen information on each ingredient
- create personal shopping lists
- access suitable recipes

Please note that this diet sheet does not endorse or recommend any particular product, brand or website and those mentioned are for guidance only.

Contact us

If you have any queries, please contact the branch of the Dietetic Department your child visits:

- Royal Berkshire Hospital Dietitians: 0118 322 7116
- East Berkshire Community Dietitians: 0118 904 3250
- West Berkshire Dietitians 0118 904 3251
- CYPF Berkshire Dietitians: 0118 904 6777

End notes

¹ Venter et al (2013) Diagnosis and management of non-IgE-mediated cow's milk allergy in infancy – a UK primary care practical guide. *Clinical and Translational Allergy*, 3:23.

² BDA Food Facts Calcium (2021) <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/calcium.html>

³ NDRi: Milk Free Weaning leaflet. (2022)

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust by Paediatric Dietitians, February 2025.

Next review due: February 2027