University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Patient Information

Nutrition and Dietetics

Allergy - milk-free diet

If you are on a milk free diet, it is important to avoid milk and milk products completely.

Cow's milk and milk products provide energy, protein, calcium, and other important vitamins. If you do not have milk, these nutrients can be provided by other foods or supplements.

A milk-free diet should only be followed under the supervision of a registered dietitian, who will make sure that your diet is nutritionally adequate.

It is not advisable to recommend a milk-free diet to anyone else without professional supervision.

Checking food labels

European Union (EU) allergen law requires that common food allergens used as ingredients or processing aids must be declared on the packaging or at the point of sale.

For pre-packed products, allergens must be listed in one place on the label and highlighted (for example, **in bold** or **underlined**). **Milk** is one of the allergens that must be listed.

For foods sold without packaging, such as in a bakery, café, or pubs, allergen information must be provided either in writing or verbally. If given verbally, the

business must be able to provide more information if requested (UK only).

Food manufacturers are not required to use a warning statement, so always check the ingredients list carefully.

Example of food label containing cow's milk:

Olive spread (margarine)

Ingredients: Vegetable oils [including olive oil (22%)], water, **whey powder (milk)**, salt (1.3%), stabiliser (sodium alginate), emulsifier (mono and diglycerides of fatty acids), lactic acid, natural flavouring, vitamins A and D, colour (carotenes)

Allergy Advice: For allergens, see ingredients in **bold**.

Foods to avoid

Milk can be labelled in many different ways, so always check the ingredients list carefully. By law, you must be able to clearly tell if a product contains milk (for example, if casein is listed, it should say 'from milk' in brackets. Avoid foods that contain**:**

Milk ingredients:

- Buttermilk
- Cow's milk (fresh, UHT)
- Condensed Milk
- Cream/artificial cream
- Evaporated milk
- Butter, butter oil
- Ghee
- Margarine
- Cheese
- Fromage Frais
- Ice Cream
- Yogurt
- Casein (curds), caseinates
- Hydrolysed casein
- Calcium or sodium caseinate
- Hydrolysed whey protein
- Lactoglobulin
- Lactoalbumin
- Lactose*
- Milk powder, skimmed milk powder
- Milk protein
- Milk sugar
- Milk solids, non-fat milk solids
- Modified milk
- Whey, whey solids, hydrolysed whey
- Whey protein, whey syrup sweetener

***Lactose** - Please discuss with your dietitian how much lactose you need to avoid.

Milk-free foods may also be called ‘dairy free.’ **Always check the label, as manufacturers sometimes change ingredients (for example, ‘new improved recipe’).**

Some products include warnings to show a possible risk of accidental milk contamination during manufacturing, even on vegan products. There is no law about how or when these statements must be used. The wording does not indicate the level of risk. For example, ‘not suitable for….’ does not mean a higher risk than ‘made in a factory that also handles milk.’

Do not assume that trace amounts of milk are safe if a product has a ‘may contain’ warning, as tolerance varies between individuals.

Allergy alerts

Sometimes foods need to be withdrawn or recalled. This may happen if allergy labelling is missing, incorrect, or if there is another food allergy risk.

You can check these alerts on the Food Standards Agency website. You can also subscribe to a free email or SMS alert system to receive messages whenever Allergy Alerts are issued.

- To subscribe, go to: **www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/subscribe**
- You can also view product alerts online at: **www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/information-training/allergy-alerts/**

Cross contamination

Cross contamination can happen when preparing foods. If you need to avoid traces of milk, make sure all work surfaces and chopping boards are thoroughly cleaned or use separate chopping boards. Use separate containers for items like jams and butter and always use clean utensils for serving.

High risk situations for cross contamination include: barbeques, buffets, deli-counters and self-service salad bars. Pre-packed sandwiches can also be a risk and are best avoided.

Suitable foods and foods to avoid

***Avoid foods marked with a star unless you are sure they are milk free.**

	Foods to avoid	**Alternatives to use**
Milk and dairy foods	All types of cow's, goat's, sheep's or ewe's milk. Yoghurts, cheese, yoghurt drinks, ready-made milk shakes. Low lactose milk, cheese and yoghurt.	(See milk-free alternative suggestions below) Milk free cheese, cheese spreads and cheese sauce mix
Fat	Butter, ghee, many margarines	Vegetable oils, lard, dripping, suet, milk free margarine
Eggs	Scotch eggs*, Quiche*, Omelette*,scrambled egg*	Cooked in any way adding milk substitute or milk free margarine if needed
Meat, fish, poultry and offal	Sausages*, beef burgers*, meat pies*, meat dishes*, meat and fish pastes*, chicken nuggets*, fish fingers*, fish cakes*, fish in sauce*, fish in batter* or breadcrumbs*, ham*, cured meats* Quorn products	All types of plain fresh or frozen. Plain fish tinned in oil or brine. Soya mince. Tofu
Fruit, vegetables and pulses	Instant potato*, potato croquettes*, potato waffles*, flavoured crisps*, Quorn products*, tofu products*, baked beans*, hummus*, coleslaw*, pies	Potatoes with milk free margarine or milk substitute. Suitable milk free crisps. All fresh, frozen, tinned or dried plain fruit, vegetables and pulses

Nuts	Roasted* or flavoured nuts*	Plain nuts- whole nuts should not be given to children under five.
Cereals	Pastry*, pizza dough*, pancakes, batters, Yorkshire pudding	Rice, pasta, couscous, semolina (cooked with milk substitute) Flour, cornflour, oats
Bread and Breakfast cereals	Alpen, cocoa krispies, chocolate cereals, Special K, muesli, milk bread, some tea breads, brioche*, croissants	Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Oatibix, Weetabix, Porridge, Ready Brek and other milk free cereals (all with milk substitute). Bread most pre-wrapped white and wholemeal
Cakes, puddings and biscuits	Cakes*, sweet biscuits*, cake mixes*, crackers*, savoury biscuits*, milk puddings, instant whips, instant desserts, instant custard, mousse, egg custard, crème caramel, cheesecake, ice-cream, yoghurts, fromage frais, Danish pastry*, sponge puddings*, cream cakes and puddings, custard powder*	Cakes and biscuits can be made using milk-free margarine and milk substitute if needed. Rye crisp bread. Puddings can be made using milk substitute and milk free margarine. Custard powder, soya yoghurts, soya ice-cream, sorbet, jelly, blancmange powder, meringue, soya desserts, coconut, oat milk, yoghurts and desserts
Sugar, sweets and preserves	Milk and white chocolate, fudge, toffee, caramel, butterscotch, milk gums, diabetic chocolate, plain chocolate*, lemon, lime or orange curd*, chocolate spread*	Plain chocolate if known to be milk free. Milk free chocolate. Boiled sweets, pastilles, fruit gums. Fruit iced lollies, sugar, syrup, honey. Jam, marmalade, mincemeat. Pickles, chutney and relishes
Baby	All baby foods containing milk	Plain baby rice – see separate

foods	or milk products	advice about weaning
Beverages	Ovaltine, Horlicks, Bournvita, malted drinks*, drinking chocolate*, Complan, Meritene, instant cappuccino, milkshake	Squash, cordials, fruit juice, milkshake and cocoa made with milk substitute. Fruit and herb teas. Tea, coffee and fizzy drinks but they are not suitable for young children
Other foods	Mayonnaise*, salad cream*, tinned or packet sauces*, tinned*, packet*, fresh soups*, gravy powders*, stock cubes*, ketchup*	Herbs, spices, mustard, salt. Pepper, vinegar. Gelatine, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda Marmite, Oxo, Bovril Tomato sauce

Milk substitutes

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for all babies, including those with a cow's milk allergy. It is important that breastfeeding mothers get support if needed. You can find help and information here: www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/breastfeeding-help-support/.

Sometimes breastfed babies react to milk proteins that pass through breast milk from the mother's diet. If this happens, you may be advised to follow a milk-free (dairy-free) diet while breastfeeding. This is usually done as a trial for 2 to 6 weeks to see if your baby's symptoms improve. If there are no improvements and you have followed the diet strictly, you can return to your normal diet.

Milk substitutes for infants and children

Infants under 12 months old:

Special milk-free formulas are available on prescription. Your dietitian or GP will advise which formula is suitable.

Children over 1 year:

Special milk-free formulas are available on prescription. Your dietitian or GP will advise which formula is suitable. However, ready to drink milk alternatives can be used as a main milk drink if there are no concerns about growth or feeding.

Ready to drink milk alternatives for children 1 years and over:

- Soya: Alpro Soya growing up drink
- Oat: Alpro growing up oat drink, Barista-style oat drinks
- Other: KoKo Kids

Milk substitute for adults and children over 2 years

Current guidance suggests using a hypoallergenic formula until 2 years of age. However, if there are no concerns about growth or feeding, your dietitian may suggest changing to a plant-based cow's milk substitute such as:

- Soya milk
- Oat milk
- KoKo dairy-free
- Hemp milk
- Hazelnut milk
- Almond milk

These plant-based milks can usually be used in cooking or with cereal for most babies over 6 months, provided there are no growth concerns. It is important to choose one with added calcium. Avoid organic options, as these often do not have added calcium.

A note on rice milk

Rice milk should not be used as a main milk drink for children under 4½ years because of concerns about arsenic. The front of the carton may not clearly indicate if the product contains rice, so always check the ingredients list if unsure.

Ways to use your milk substitute

Drinks

- Milkshakes: Flavour milk substitute with milkshake syrup or blend with fresh fruit, such as bananas, to make a smoothie.
- Hot drinks: use milk substitute in coffee, cocoa, or milk-free drinking chocolate.

Puddings

Many puddings can be made using milk substitute:

- Rice, sago, tapioca, semolina, or custard.
- Milk jellies (½ milk substitute + ½ water).
- Homemade ice cream or blancmange.

Soups and sauces

- White sauces such as parsley, mustard, onion, bread, or mushroom.
- Soup made from milk-free packet soups or homemade soups using milk substitute instead of water.

Other ways to use milk substitute

Milk substitute can also be used in:

- Mashed potato (with milk free margarine)
- Scrambled eggs
- Batters for coating fish
- Yorkshire puddings
- Pancakes

Many recipes can be adapted for a milk-free diet by using milk-free margarine and milk substitute. Milk-free recipe books are also available.

Suitable margarines

The following dairy-free margarines can be used instead of butter or regular margarine:

- Pure
- Vitaquell
- Flora Dairy free
- Suma
- Tomor
- Biona
- Vitalite Dairy free
- Supermarket own brand dairy-free margarine

Some of these are also available to order online.

Calcium

Cows' milk and milk products are the main source of calcium, which is needed for strong and healthy bones. If cows' milk is removed from the diet, an alternative source of calcium is needed.

- Babies under 12 months: Most hypoallergenic formulas provide enough vitamins and minerals in about 600ml (20floz/ 1 pint) per day, but this can vary by formula. Your dietitian can advise on the ideal amount. If your baby drinks less than 600ml per day, let your dietitian know so they can check if any supplements are needed.
- Children aged 1-3 years: They generally need 300-400ml (10floz) of a calcium-fortified milk substitute each day. Some products contain less calcium, so the volume needed may be higher.
- Tips: If your child isn't drinking enough milk substitute, use it in breakfast cereals and in cooking, such as for white sauces, puddings, milk jelly, custard or rice pudding.

The following table shows how much is needed for each age group:

Age	Calcium/day (mg)	Age	Calcium/day (mg)
0-12 months	525 mg	Boys 11-18 years	1000 mg
1-3 years	350 mg	Girls 11-18 years	800 mg
4-6 years	450 mg	Breastfeeding mums	1250 mg
7-10 years	550 mg		

Vitamin D

UK Health Department daily recommendations:

- All breastfed babies should take a vitamin D supplement from birth.
- Formula-fed babies usually get enough vitamin D if they drink 600ml of infant formula per day. If they drink less, a vitamin D supplement should be given.

Recommended amounts:

- Babies under 1 year: 8.5-10 µg (340-400 IU) vitamin D per day.
- Everyone over 1 year, including pregnant and breastfeeding mothers): 10 µg (400IU) vitamin D per day.

Your dietitian can advise how much vitamin D you and your child need each day.

If you qualify for Healthy Start, you can get Healthy Start vitamin drops from your local pharmacy or Family Hub. Otherwise, a children's vitamin D supplement can be bought from chemists or supermarkets. Ask your pharmacist for advice if you are not sure which supplement to use.

If your child avoids other foods in addition to milk and egg, your dietitian may suggest additional vitamin or mineral supplements.

Dental care

Formula milks for children with a milk allergy contain glucose or corn syrup instead of lactose.

These can increase the risk of tooth decay, so pay extra attention to your child's dental care.

- Always make up the feed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Do not add more powder to water than stated.
- Once a feed is finished, take the bottle away. Do not let your baby use the bottle as a comforter, or suck from it while going to sleep.
- When your child is old enough (around 6 months), introduce a lidded beaker or cup for milk substitute and aim to stop bottle feeds after 1 year of age.

Brushing teeth:

- Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as they appear.
- Brush last thing at night and on one other occasion during the day.
- Use a soft toothbrush with a smear of family fluoride toothpaste. At age 3, increase the toothpaste to a pea-sized amount.
- Encourage your child to spit out after brushing and do not rinse.

Your baby's first tooth usually appears around 6 months. Ask your dentist when to start regular check-ups.

Meal suggestions – Milk free diet

Breakfast	Suitable cereal or porridge with milk substitute Fruit with soya yoghurt Bread or toast with milk-free margarine and jam, honey or marmalade Egg, bacon, fish, or suitable baked beans, mushrooms, tomato

	Fruit juice Cup of milk substitute Tea or coffee made with milk substitute
Snack/ light meal	Sandwiches with milk free margarine and filling such as meat, fish, egg or suitable hummus Toast with milk-free baked beans, fish or egg Jacket potato with milk-free baked beans, tinned fish or meat sauce Chapatti with dhal, meat or chicken curry and vegetables
Main Meal	Meat or fish with potato and vegetables Meat or fish with rice, plain pasta or chapatti and vegetables Dhal with chapatti or rice and vegetables Omelette (no milk) with bread with milk-free margarine, served with salad or vegetables Baked beans with jacket potato and salad
Puddings/ desserts	Soya yoghurt Soya ice cream Fruit sorbet Fresh or tinned fruit Jelly Custard or milk jelly made with milk substitute (not instant) Rice, sago, tapioca, or semolina pudding made with milk substitute Fruit crumble made with milk-free margarine
Snacks	Fresh or dried fruit Bread or toast with milk-free margarine Suitable crisps occasionally Soya yoghurt Milk-free biscuits or cake

	Milk-free crackers Plain popcorn

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