Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Dietetics

Introducing milk-free solids to your baby

The recommended age for introducing solid foods is 24 weeks (6 months). This is no different for babies with food allergies or intolerances. It is not advisable to wean before 17 weeks.

One of the most important nutrients to consider for babies with a milk allergy is calcium. This is usually obtained by taking an adequate intake of breast milk or the milk substitute (alternative formula) your GP or paediatrician has advised for your baby.

Your baby may already be taking one of the alternative formulas such as:

- Nutramigen 1 LGG or 2 LGG (2 is suitable from 6 months)
- Aptamil Pepti 1 or Pepti 2 (2 is suitable from 6 months) or Aptamil Pepti Syneo
- Aptamil Pepti Junior
- Similac Alimentum
- SMA Althéra
- Neocate LCP or Neocate Syneo
- Puramino
- SMA Alfamino
- EleCare
- SMA Soya Infant Formula (N.B: Soya formulas are not usually recommended for children under 6 months)

Cow's milk is not suitable for any baby under 12 months as their main milk drink. It is certainly not suitable for babies with cow's milk allergy. Goat's milk and sheep's milk are very similar to cow's milk, so they are not recommended either and are also likely to cause allergy symptoms.

Alternative kinds of milk, which are not prescribed, such as oat, soya, almond and coconut milk, should not be used as the main source of milk for children under 2 years old. They can be used in cooking and on cereals from 6 months. Rice milk should not be used before 4½ years.

How much breast milk/formula your baby needs

Breastfed babies or babies on alternative formulas, providing they are gaining weight adequately, will meet their calcium needs. Breast milk contains less calcium than formulas, but it's absorbed better from breast milk.

When your baby starts to eat solids, if their intake of breast milk or formula reduces a little, do not worry. They will get additional calcium from calcium-rich foods including fortified breakfast cereals, milk-free yogurts and some breads.

Stage 2 formulas, prescribed from 6 months, usually have higher calcium content than Stage 1 formulas.

If your baby is not taking enough breast milk or formula, they may not be fully meeting their calcium needs, and they may need a calcium supplement. The dietitian will assess this and will advise on the best way to make sure enough calcium is taken.

Is your baby ready to start solids?

Babies are not ready for solids before 17 weeks old. Many are not ready until closer to 6 months.

Before you start weaning, check that your baby can sit as upright as possible (slightly inclined if necessary) and they can hold their head well without being too floppy.

They should be showing an interest in others eating and should be starting to bring toys and fingers to their mouths.

When should I start?

Choose a time when your baby is most awake and most willing to interact. Initially, offer solids at just one feed time. Build up to 3 meals a day over 4 to 6 weeks.

What should I give?

Foods such as pureed rice, potatoes, root and green vegetables, and fruit are good starting choices if weaning from 17 weeks.

Use a little of your baby's usual milk (breast or hypoallergenic formula) to mix the food to the desired consistency. If the food is too runny, add baby rice or potato to thicken it.

As babies are starting to wean nearer to 6 months, they can move on to thick but smooth paste textures after just a few days or weeks.

How much is enough?

To start, give 2 to 3 teaspoons of food. Gradually increase this to a small bowl each meal, with a small pudding to follow.

Your baby will tell you when they've had enough. Try not to force an extra spoon here and there.

Your baby's milk feeds may slowly decrease, but they will still need plenty of milk. By 7 to 8 months, most babies have 3 meals a day, with a main course and pudding at lunch and an evening meal.

By one year of age, they might just have milk in the morning, at bedtime and maybe one in the day. If they drink too much milk after this age, they may not eat enough food.

Allergenic foods

Some foods such as nuts, eggs, soya, gluten, wheat, fish, shellfish, sesame, and other seeds are considered more likely to cause an allergic reaction.

There is no evidence to support delaying the introduction of these foods later than 6 months. Soya should not be given before 6 months. Delaying their introduction until over 12 months old may actually increase a child's risk of developing an allergy to that food.

Introduce these allergenic foods one at a time. If there are no adverse reactions observed after 3 days, move on to the next food.

If your baby has a fast allergic reaction to food (hives, facial swelling, immediate vomiting or difficulty breathing) on their first introduction of these foods and need an antihistamine, stop giving the food. Further introduction of this food will need to be done under the supervision of an allergy team.

Food introduction

First weaning (not before 17weeks)	From 6 months (26 weeks)	7 to 9 months	9 to 12 months
Serve food as:	Serve food as:	Serve food as:	Serve food as:
Smooth purees	Well-mashed foods	Mashed foods with some lumps and soft finger foods	Mashed, chopped and minced family meals and finger foods
Introduce:	Introduce:	Introduce:	Introduce:
Smooth cereals, e.g. baby rice, flaked rice, ground quinoa, cornmeal	Gluten containing foods (wheat, barley, rye) – bread and cereals, oats, pasta, couscous	Bread, chapatti, cereals, pasta, rice, polenta, noodles, couscous	Bread, chapatti, cereals, pasta, rice, polenta, noodles, couscous
Soft-cooked pureed/ mashed fruit - bananas, pears, apple, plum, peach, avocado, tomato pureed / sauce, citrus flavours	Soft-cooked/ mashed fruit - bananas, pears, apple, plum, peach,, avocado, tomato pureed / sauce, citrus flavours	Raw soft fruit and finger foods e.g. banana, melon, mango, avocado, kiwi, berry fruits Stewed fruit, fresh tomato, citrus fruits	Raw soft fruit and finger foods e.g. banana, melon, mango, avocado, kiwi, berry fruits Stewed fruit, fresh tomato, citrus fruits
Soft-cooked root and green vegetables, potatoes, yam, green banana	Mashed root and green vegetables, potatoes, yam, green banana	Raw soft vegetables e.g. cucumber, courgette and lightly cooked vegetables, potatoes, yam, green banana	Raw soft vegetables e.g. cucumber, courgette and lightly cooked vegetables, potatoes, yam, green banana

First weaning (not before 17weeks)	**From 6 months (26 weeks)**	**7 to 9 months**	**9 to 12 months**
Pureed pulses/ lentils Meat and poultry (pureed)	Mashed lentils/ pulses Finely chopped/ pureed meat, poultry, fish hummus, smooth nut spreads Yoghurt and cheese alternatives- soya, coconut or oat yoghurt, milk-free cheese, milk free custards/ desserts	Mashed lentils/ pulses Finely chopped/ minced meat, poultry, shellfish & flaked fish, hummus, smooth nut spreads Yoghurt and cheese alternatives - soya, coconut or oat yoghurt, milk-free cheese, milk free custards/ desserts	Mashed lentils/ pulses Chopped/ minced meat, poultry, shellfish, fish, hummus, smooth nut spreads Yoghurt and cheese alternatives - soya, coconut or oat yoghurt, milk-free cheese, milk free custards/ desserts
	British Lion Stamped Egg	British Lion Stamped Egg	British Lion Stamped Egg
	Pureed/mashed boiled, scrambled egg (with breast milk or milk substitute) Smooth peanut butter	Mashed/sliced boiled, scrambled egg (with breast milk or milk substitute) Smooth peanut butter	Chopped boiled egg, scrambled egg (with breast milk or milk substitute) Smooth peanut butter

Patient Information

Manufactured baby foods

If you’re using manufactured baby foods/jars, these may contain milk. Check the label or ingredient lists carefully.

Customer care lines found on jars can give more information on individual products.

Food labelling

Every pre-packed food, sold in the UK and European Union (EU) must show clearly on the label if it contains any of 14 major allergens. This includes milk. These must be highlighted (in bold, colour or underlined) on food labels within the ingredients list.

Food manufacturers are not required to use a warning statement – always check the ingredients first. However, to help when you go shopping the following list may be useful.

These foods all contain milk and must be avoided:

- milk - cow's milk - pasteurised, sterilised, UHT, longlife, semi-skimmed, skimmed, dried, evaporated, condensed.
- goat's, sheep’s, or ewe's milk.
- cheese and cheese spreads
- butter
- many brands of margarine
- yoghurt and fromage frais
- cream
- ice-cream
- pro-biotic drinks

It's not always obvious that processed foods contain milk. If a food label lists any of the ingredients below, the food must be avoided:

- butter / buttermilk / butter oil
- casein / caseinates / hydrolysed casein
- cheese / cheese curds
- cream and artificial cream
- lactose / lactate / lactitol
- margarine or shortening containing whey
- milk / milk powders / milk solids / non-fat milk solids
- whey / hydrolysed whey/ whey butter / whey cream / whey protein
- hydrolysed milk protein
- Whey syrup sweetener
- Yoghurt

Example daily menu for 1st stage milk-free solids

On waking	Breast feed or special formula
Breakfast	Baby rice or milk-free cereal with expressed breastmilk or special formula
Mid-morning	Breast feed or special formula
Lunch	• Sieved/ blended/ minced meat/ chicken / fish / lentils • Boiled and mashed potato (mashed with breast milk/ special formula) • Well-cooked and sieved vegetables • Fruit puree
Mid-afternoon	Breast feed or special formula

Evening	Custard or pudding made with special formula or fruit puree
Bedtime	Breast feed or special formula

Dental care

Formula milk designed for children with a milk allergy contain glucose or corn syrup rather than lactose (milk sugar). These are less kind to teeth. Please pay special attention to your child's dental care.

Always make up the milk to the manufacturer's instructions; do not add more powder to water than is stated.

Once a feed is finished, take away the bottle. Do not use it as a comforter allowing your baby to suck the bottle while going to sleep.

At around 6 months, introduce a lidded beaker. Aim to stop using bottles at 1 year. As soon as your baby's first tooth comes through, start brushing twice a day with a soft brush.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

The Department of Health recommends that a supplement containing Vitamin D and Vitamin A is given to:

- All breastfed babies from 6 months of age
- Breastfed babies from 1 month old who are at high risk of vitamin D deficiency (i.e. from families with dark pigmented skin where mothers did not take a vitamin supplement during pregnancy, even if the mother is now taking a vitamin D supplement while breastfeeding)
- Babies under one year who are taking less than 500ml (18floz) of infant formula daily
- All children from 1 to 5 years of age

If you receive income support, you can obtain Healthy Start Vitamin drops from your local baby clinic or health visitor.

Otherwise, you can buy children's vitamins containing vitamins A and D from pharmacies and supermarkets. Ask your pharmacist for advice if you are unsure which supplement to buy.

Low calcium intakes are often a concern for children on milk-free diets, particularly if they do not have enough cow's milk substitute or non-dairy foods that are rich in calcium. If you have concerns, ask your dietitian for advice.

If your child is avoiding other foods in addition to milk and dairy products, your dietitian may suggest additional vitamin or mineral supplements.

Breastfeeding mums have higher calcium requirements which can be difficult to meet from diet alone. Unless you are drinking 1000ml of a calcium-fortified milk substitute per day or adequate calcium-rich foods, you may need a supplement.

A vitamin D supplement (10mcg/day) is also recommended.

More information and useful websites

For more information on calcium, speak with your dietitian or see the BDA calcium fact sheet: https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/calcium.html

Allergy UK FoodMaestro

This leaflet was produced by Coventry dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust. If you have any more questions, please contact the team on 024 7696 6161.

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