Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

## Nutrition and Dietetics

# Reintroduction of cow's milk

Many children grow out of their cow's milk allergy by the age of 5. By reintroducing milk slowly in a stepwise way (using the Milk Ladder), you can find out which milk products your child can tolerate.

For some children who have had severe reactions or have asthma, it may not be safe to do this at home. You should ask your GP, allergy specialist or dietitian for advice if you are unsure.

### Do not use the milk ladder if your child:

- Is unwell (has a cough, cold or fever).
- Has eczema flares (eczema needs to be well controlled).
- Has teething symptoms
- Has tummy symptoms such as being sick (vomiting), loose stools, or tummy pain.
- Is on medication that may affect the gut, such as antibiotics.

### You can use the milk ladder if:

- A health professional has confirmed it is safe to do at home.
- You are not introducing any new foods or known allergens.
- Your child is well.

## How to use the Milk Ladder:

- Start with Step 1. If your child has already tolerated foods from a higher step of the milk ladder, you may start at that step.

- If your child's reactions are more severe, start with a ¼ or a ½ portion and slowly increase the amount to a full child-sized portion over a few days.

- If the food is well tolerated after a few times, keep this food in your child's diet and move on to the next step. For example, if step 1 foods are tolerated, move on to step 2.

- The time spent on each step will vary. Some children move on within a week, while others may take several months to complete a step.

- Once your child has completed the milk ladder, you can replace all current milk substitutes, such as bottles and cereals with regular cow's milk.

## If your child has a reaction:

- Stop giving the foods from the current step only.
- Go back to the previously tolerated step.
- Try the step again after 2-3 months.

## If your child is ill during the Milk Ladder:

- Pause the current step of the milk ladder until your child is well again.
- You can keep giving foods that have already been tolerated.

# Top tips:

- Introduce new foods earlier in the day (morning or lunchtime), so symptoms can be observed.
- Take time to plan and avoid introducing new foods when you are busy, such as holidays, starting nursery, or before important appointments.
- It may be helpful to keep a record of food intake and any symptoms.
- Be aware of other allergies your child may have, for example wheat, egg, and soya. Always check food labels for suitability.

# The Milk ladder

| Step | Food type |
|---|---|
| **1**<br>Foods containing small amounts of baked milk | **Malted milk biscuits or plain biscuits** containing milk<br>**Muffins or cupcakes** (without icing)<br>**Scones**<br>**Cheesy breadsticks**<br>**Pastry** made with butter or margarine<br>**Shortbread/shortcake** made with butter or margarine<br>**Crackers** containing cheese or milk<br>**Croissant or brioche**<br>**Bread that contains milk,** such as milk loaf |
| **2** | **Scotch pancake –** Around 8ml of milk per pancake if home-made<br>**Margarine or butter** containing milk products<br>**Cheese powder flavourings** like Cheese-flavoured crisps |
| **3**<br>Foods with a larger amount of well-cooked milk | **Shepherd's pie or baked cheesy mash potato –** 110g mashed potatoes, 7g butter, 12ml milk and 6g cheddar cheese baked for 30 minutes |
| **4**<br>More foods with well-cooked milk | **Fish pie**<br>**Lasagne** (white sauce from a jar that has been baked for 30 minutes) |
| **5**<br>Whole dairy foods that are heated | **15g baked or melted cheese** on toast or pizza **–** if possible, choose a pizza that does not contain milk in the base |
| **6**<br>Heated whole dairy foods | **Custard**<br>**Rice pudding** (start with ¼, ½ portion and aim for a full child's portion: 5-7 tablespoons) |
| **7** | **15g Milk chocolate** (treat-size bag of chocolate buttons) |
| **8** | **Fromage frais** (2 small pots, about 50g each) |
| **9** | **Yoghurt –** (125ml or 4.5 fl oz) |
| **10** | **Cheese (15-25g) –** For example cheddar or mozzarella |
| **11** | **Ice cream –** start with ¼ of a child's portion, then ½ , then a full child's portion (child portion = 1 scoop or 50g) |
| **12** | **UHT milk/Infant formula (tetra packs):**<br>Start with 100ml (3.5 fl oz), build up to 200ml (7 fl oz).<br>If your child refuses the new milk on its own, you can mix it with their current milk and slowly increase the new milk. |
| **13** | **Pasteurised milk/ Infant formula (powder)**<br>Follow the same approach as in step 12. |

## Calcium

For more information on age-appropriate calcium requirements, type “BDA Calcium” into your preferred search engine.

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