

When Your Baby is Allergic to Cow's Milk Protein

What to eat while feeding your baby breastmilk

What is cow's milk protein allergy?

This is a common food allergy in babies. It happens when a baby's body overreacts to the protein in the milk of cows. This allergy can damage the baby's stomach and intestines.

This is called a Cow's Milk Protein Allergy (CMPA). Sometimes, you hear it called Cow's Milk Colitis (*say ko-lite-us*).

Can this happen to babies fed breastmilk?

Yes. The cow's milk protein from the food you eat can pass through into your breast milk.

The more cow's milk protein you eat plus the more your baby is sensitive to that protein, the more severe the reaction and more harm it can be to your baby.

It can take up to 3 weeks for all traces of the protein to leave your body.

What should I do now that I know my baby has this allergy?

You need to remove cow's milk and other dairy products from your daily diet. This includes milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, cream, and ice cream. Cow's milk protein hides in other foods and drinks as well (see page 3).

Your doctor or dietitian might ask you to pump and freeze breastmilk for a certain length of time after you start a diet free of cow's milk protein.

Your doctor or dietitian talks with you about what to feed your baby during this time.

How long do I need to follow a diet free of cow's milk protein?

It depends on how your baby reacts to the protein. Your doctor or dietitian will tell you how long you need to eat this way.

Will my baby grow out of this allergy?

About one half of the babies who have this allergy grow out of the allergy by 1 year of age.

Of those babies who still have the allergy after 1 year of age, most of them outgrow the allergy by 3 years of age.

How can I tell what foods have cow's milk protein?

Read the whole ingredient list carefully. Look for milk products as well as other names for milk. See page 3 for examples.

If a product does not have an ingredient list, don't buy it or contact the manufacturer to be sure.

Below is an example of 2 food labels for frozen pizza. The ingredients with cow's milk protein are circled.

✔ Okay
<p>Ingredients Unbleached wheat flour, wheat germ, wheat bran, onions, water, artichokes, extra virgin olive oil, roasted red peppers, shiitake mushrooms, sugar, balsamic vinegar, sea salt, tomato puree, expeller pressed high oleic safflower oil, evaporated cane juice, garlic, lemon juice, yeast, spices, black pepper Contains: wheat</p>

✘ Not Okay
<p>Ingredients Enriched wheat flour, water, vegetable oil, yeast, sea salt, sugar, cherry tomatoes, red and green bell peppers, red onion, spices, tomato puree, olive paste, modified corn starch, garlic, chili peppers, tomato paste, vinegar, palm oil, <u>caramel colour</u>, <u>rice flour</u>, <u>lemon juice</u>, <u>mozzarella cheese</u> Contains: wheat, milk</p>

Shopping tip – Take page 3 with you

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What about non-dairy or lactose-free products?

These foods can still have cow's milk protein in them. Always read the whole ingredient list.

Can I still eat out?

Yes, but be very careful what you choose.

- Ask what is added in the cooking.
- Tell those serving and cooking that you must not have any dairy products.
- Use the list on page 3.

How do I get enough calcium if I am not drinking milk?

Calcium is an important for healthy bones, nails and muscles. When you don't have enough calcium in your diet, your body uses the calcium in your bones to make breastmilk.

To get enough calcium in your diet, choose:

- milk substitutes enriched with calcium and other nutrients (example: soy, rice or almond milk)
 - scallops, oysters, and canned salmon or sardines with soft bones
 - certain vegetables such as broccoli, kale, bok choy, and other green leafy vegetables
 - juices fortified with calcium
- Check the ingredient list for milk products.
- other sources of calcium such as almonds, brazil nuts, and dates

Do I need a calcium supplement?

Breastfeeding mothers need from 1000 to 1300 mg of calcium each day.

To make sure you are getting enough with breastfeeding, you might need to take a calcium supplement.

Ask your dietitian:

- if you need extra calcium, and
- how much you should be taking

Your body can only absorb 500 mg of calcium at a time. If you are to take more than 500 mg, it is best to take half the amount in the morning and the rest in the evening. This gives your body a chance to absorb most of the calcium.

Common calcium supplements:

- calcium carbonate
- calcium citrate
- calcium gluconate

You can take calcium carbonate with food.

Check the ingredients on the label for cow's milk protein.

What about Vitamin D?

Continue to give your baby a vitamin D supplement. Check the ingredients on the label to be sure.

You might also need to take a vitamin D supplement. The easiest way to do this is to continue taking your prenatal multivitamin or mineral supplement.

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Other names for milk:	
ammonium/calcium/ magnesium/potassium/ sodium caseinate	lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate
beta-lactoglobulin	lactoferrin
casein/caseinate/rennet casein	lactoglobulin
curds	milk derivative, milk fat, milk protein
delactosed or demineralised whey	modified milk ingredients
dry milk, milk, sour cream, sour milk solids	Opta™, Simplese® (fat replacers)
hydrolyzed casein, hydrolyzed milk protein	whey, whey protein concentrate

Foods with cow's milk protein:	
baked goods and baking mixes	ghee
brown sugar	high protein flour
butter, artificial butter flavour	kefir
buttermilk	lactose
caramel colouring or flavouring	malted milk
cereals, cookies, crackers	margarine made with cow's milk
cheese	milk
coffee whitener	milk chocolate
condensed milk	non-dairy creamer
cream	nougat
cream cheese	salad dressings
curds	sour cream
dips	soups, soup mixes
evaporated milk	spreads
	yogurt made with cow's milk

Safe food choices (cow's milk free)	
To replace milk	"milks" made from soy, rice, almonds, oats cashews, peas
To replace butter	dairy-free margarine, vegan "butter"
To replace yogurt	vegan yogurt, soy yogurt, coconut yogurt
To replace cheese	soy cheese, vegan cheese
To replace sour cream and cream cheese	vegan sour cream
To replace ice cream	sorbet, vegan ice cream

Lists are current as of February 2021. Refer to foodallergycanada.ca/allergies/milk for updates.

For more information, contact your Registered Dietitian at _____
or call 8-1-1 to speak with a Registered Dietitian.

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.