

Children over two years old

Ready made oat milk, pea milk, rice milk*, soya milk, quinoa milk, coconut milk and nut milks (if no risk of allergic reaction) can be used. Choose products which are fortified with calcium. Organic options will not have added calcium

* Rice milk is not recommended under four and a half years due to naturally occurring arsenic.

If you are unable to get your child to take any of the above milk substitutes it is important to seek advice from a registered dietitian as it may be necessary to start a vitamin or mineral supplement.

Regular dietetic review is recommended for infants on a restricted diet and specialised formula. Your GP will be advised to stop prescribing the milk substitute if you do not attend your review.

If you are concerned about your child's diet or have any queries regarding this advice please contact a dietitian at Bedford Hospital on 01234 792171 or via email: Dietetics@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk

Nutrition and Dietetics

Suitable Milks for Infants and Children with Cow's Milk Allergy



A information leaflet for parents about how to substitute cow's milk for infants and children with an allergy.

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If you have a child with cow's milk protein allergy it is important to replace cow's milk with an alternative that will provide the same nutrients.

Breast milk

Breast milk is best for babies. It provides all the nourishment that a young baby requires, as well as many other non-nutritive factors such as antibodies. If your baby has been diagnosed as having a cow's milk allergy and has ongoing symptoms whilst being breastfed, you may be advised to exclude cow's milk from your own diet. This should only be done after discussion with a registered dietitian, as it is important that breast-feeding mums eat a healthy balanced diet.

Formulas from birth to two years

If you need a formula to be given in addition to breast milk, or as an alternative, a range of formulas are available. It is recommended that a qualified healthcare professional such as a registered dietitian, a paediatrician, an allergist, GP or health visitor advises you on the most appropriate choice.

Extensively hydrolysed formula

Nutramigen 1 and 2

Milupa Aptamil Pepti 1 and 2

It is the whole milk protein in the regular formula that causes an allergic reaction. In these formula the milk protein is broken down into smaller segments, reducing the likelihood of causing a reaction.

Amino Acid Formula

Neocate LCP

Nutramigen AA

These formulas are made of the individual building blocks (amino acids) that make up proteins. These are used only when a hydrolysed formula has not been tolerated or if an extensively hydrolysed formula is not appropriate.

Soya based formulas

SMA Wysoy

Infasoy

Infant formulas based on soya milk are not suitable for infants under six months.

Over six months, soya based formulas should only be used if recommended by a healthcare professional and soya protein allergy, common in children with cow's milk protein, has been ruled out.

Top tips

These milk substitutes smell and taste very different to regular formula or breast milk. It can take some time for infants/children to get used to them. By not offering an alternative, many infants will change formulas after a few feeds .

You could try mixing a little with the regular formula, increasing the proportion of the new milk at each feed (don't do this if the child's reaction to the regular formula is severe). You can try to hide the flavour with a small amount of milkshake powder (e.g. strawberry Nesquik™).

Other cows' milk substitutes

Other mammalian milks (goat's milk formula, sheep's milk formula etc) are not suitable because children who are unable to tolerate cow's milk are at high risk of reacting to other mammalian milks.

Children over one year old

Ready made Alpro Junior 1+ would be a suitable milk for a child who is allergic to cow's milk protein but tolerates soya milk products. At present it has limited availability.