

Let's Talk About...

Milk Allergy

What is a milk allergy?

A milk allergy is an allergic reaction to the protein in milk. Casein is the main protein in milk. Children with a milk allergy must not drink or eat milk products or foods with milk proteins. The most common milk allergy symptoms include the following:

Skin Reactions:

- itchy red rash
- hives
- eczema
- allergic “shiners” (black eyes)
- swelling of lips, mouth, tongue, face, and throat

Stomach Reactions:

- abdominal pain and bloating
- diarrhea (usually very runny)
- vomiting
- gas
- cramps

Nose, Throat, and Lung Reactions:

- runny nose
- sneezing
- water or itchy eyes
- coughing
- wheezing
- shortness of breath

Milk allergy is not the same as lactose intolerance. Lactose intolerance means the body does not make enough lactase. Lactase digests the sugar in milk. People with lactose intolerance can have belly pain, gas, and bloating. If you think your child has lactose intolerance you should discuss treatment options with your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.

Cross-reactivity occurs when the proteins in one food are similar to the proteins in another. When that happens, the body's immune system sees them as the same. There is a high degree of cross-reactivity between cow's milk and the milk from other mammals such as goat and sheep. In studies, the risk of allergy (resulting in symptoms) to goat's milk or sheep's milk in a person with cow's milk allergy is about 90%.

What do I do for my child with milk allergy?

To treat a milk allergy, your child should not eat or drink milk or any foods with milk or dairy products. You and your child will need to read labels on food for milk products.

What do I look for when I read the food labels?

- Labels on food that are regulated by the FDA have to say if the food contains the 8 most common food allergens: milk, egg, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, or fish. Always read the ingredient list to be sure and check all food labels carefully. Manufacturers may change ingredients without warning.
- Allergen Advisory Statement—“May contain [allergen]” or “Produced in a facility that also produces products containing [allergen].”
- Avoid any food product that contains an Advisory Statement for your child's food allergies.

Below is an example of a food label:

Ingredients

Whole Oats, Brown Rice Syrup, Rice Crisps (Milled Rice, Sugar, Salt, Barley Malt), Diced Apples, Evaporated Cane Juice Syrup, Raisins, Roasted Soy Beans, Almond Butter, Honey, Pear and Grape Juice Concentrate, Brown Rice Flour, Soy Protein Isolate, Glycerin, Natural Flavors, Cinnamon, Nonfat Milk

Contains milk, nut and soy ingredients. Made on equipment that also processed peanuts and wheat.

What are some names for milk on food labels?

The following are some names for milk derived products. Dairy, includes milk (whole, 2%, 1%, or non-fat/skim), dry milk solids, butter, cream, half and half, sour cream, cottage cheese, cheese (any type), ice cream, yogurt, kefir, eggnog, instant breakfast powders or liquids, and other milk based protein drinks.

Ingredients that contain milk		
Artificial butter flavor	Dairy	Milk protein hydrolysate
Butter fat	Diacetyl	Protein hydrolysate
Butter milk	Ghee	Rennet casein
Butter oil	Lactaglobulin	Tagatose
Casein	Lactalbumin	Whey
Caseinates (in all forms)	Lactoalbumin phosphate	Whey hydrolysate
Cheese	Lactoferrin	
Cream	Lactose	

“Non-dairy” foods may still contain milk proteins, so take time to read labels. Many packaged meals, vegetables, gravies, sauces, soups, and salad mixes contain milk. Current U.S. food labeling regulations allow for an item to be labeled as “non-dairy” on the package. A food can be labeled non-dairy even if it has casein in it, a milk protein. The ingredient statement on non-dairy products will list “casein” or “caseinates” and the word “milk” if it is an ingredient.

Always read the label for milk and milk products.

Will my child get enough nutrients by avoiding milk?

Milk provides a good source of many nutrients essential for your child’s growth and bone development. This is especially important during peak growth periods.

Nutrient’s lost when avoiding milk	Suggested alternate sources (if not allergic)
Protein, Calcium, Riboflavin, Phosphorus, Vitamins A, D, and B12	Increase other protein foods: eat fish, poultry, legumes, eggs (if safe for your child), fortified milk substitutes; leafy greens, nuts, calcium-fortified foods

How can I help my child get the right nutrients?

You will need to choose foods with care to replace the essential nutrients lost by avoiding milk. Meats, poultry, eggs, fish, nuts and legumes can easily provide needed protein. However, to replace calcium, your child may need to consume a lot of non-dairy food sources containing calcium. This may be more than a young child is capable of eating.

Many non-dairy sources of calcium are not foods that are favorites of most children. For example, 1 cup of leafy greens contains as much calcium as 4 ounces of milk. A child who needs 500 milligrams of calcium daily would need to eat as much as 4 cups of leafy greens to meet the need. The likelihood of a child eating that much is very small. You and your child will need to read labels carefully to find a variety of calcium-fortified foods.

You may be able to use milk alternatives as an acceptable substitute if your child is over one-year-old. Examples include:

- Soy milk
- Fortified rice milk
- Fortified grain or seed milks (hemp milk, oat milk, flax milk)
- Fortified nut milks (almond or cashew milk)
- Fortified coconut milk
- Fortified pea protein based milk

Any of these milk substitutes can be used, if tolerated. Make sure they are a good source of calcium and additional nutrients. A substitute for a glass of milk will have 30% calcium and 8 grams of protein per 8 ounce serving. Review the nutrition information on the package to check for the amount of nutrients.

Calcium fortified juices will provide additional calcium but are not a good source of other nutrients.

In some cases, you may need to give your child dietary supplements. However, if your child is at an age when a specialized milk-free formula is a large part of the daily diet, supplementation may not be necessary.

How do I substitute milk in recipes?

There are many milk alternatives based with nuts, legumes, seeds, peas, and grains. Many are available in original (plain), unsweetened, vanilla, and chocolate flavors. Generally, the unsweetened and unflavored versions work best in recipes and can be substituted 1-for-1 in recipes.

When cooking, you can substitute non-dairy margarine or oils (in equal amounts) for butter.

Soy-based, coconut-based, almond and cashew-based, and pea-based cheese, yogurt, sour cream, and cream cheese products are available. Be sure to check the ingredient list as some products, especially cheese, may still have casein in them.

Below are tables of foods allowed and foods to avoid:

Foods your child can eat (No milk)	Foods your child should NOT eat (Contain milk)
Beverages and Formula	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All carbonated drinks Fruit juices Punch Tea <p>Non-Dairy Beverages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almond milk Cashew milk Coconut milk or water Flax milk Hemp milk Pea protein milk Rice milk Soy milk <p>Infant/Pediatric Formulas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypoallergenic Formula Soy formulas 	<p>All milk or milk products such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buttermilk Condensed milk Dry skim milk powder, milk solids, or milk proteins Evaporated milk Goats milk Hot chocolate Kefir Lactose-Free Milk Lowfat milk Malted milk Nido® Ovaltine Skim milk Whole milk <p>Infant/Pediatric formulas with milk</p> <p>Non-Dairy Beverages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee creamers
Dairy Products	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheeses Cottage cheese Cream Cream solids Custard Frozen yogurt Half-and-half Ice cream Nacho cheese Natural or processed Nougat Pudding Sour cream (inc. imitation) Velveeta® cheese Whipping cream Yogurt
Eggs, Meats, Fish and Poultry	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All plain eggs, beef, chicken, fish, ham, turkey, lamb, veal and pork Baby foods without milk products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creamed or breaded meats, fish or chicken Hotdogs with milk solids Luncheon meats or cold cuts with milk solids Omelets with cheese or milk Sausages Souffle's
Fruits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All baby fruit without milk products All fresh fruits Canned and frozen fruits without milk products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All baby fruits with milk Canned or frozen fruit with milk

Foods your child can eat (No milk)	Foods your child should NOT eat (Contain milk)
Vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All baby vegetables without milk products All fresh vegetables Canned or frozen vegetables without milk products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All baby vegetables with milk Breaded vegetables Buttered vegetables Creamed vegetables Frozen french fries with milk Instant potatoes Vegetable products with milk
Breads, Cereals and Pasta	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breads and rolls made without milk or dairy products. French bread Hot cereals Cold Cereals not containing milk Crackers: Graham crackers Oyster crackers Pretzels Saltines Pasta and Starches: Noodles (wheat and rice based) Rice Whole Grains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial breads, rolls, cereal, crackers made with milk or dairy English muffins (read label) Instant cream-of-wheat or oatmeal with milk Prepared Mixes: Biscuits Muffins Pancakes Waffles Crackers containing milk: Club-type crackers Flavored graham crackers Zweiback® crackers
Soups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear soups and consommés Commercial soups without milk (read label carefully) Homemade soups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any soups with milk Chowders Commercial creamed soups
Fats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bacon Coconut butters or oil Margarine and dressings without milk Vegetable oils Vegetable shortening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter Cream Cream cheese Ghee Margarine and dressings containing milk
Desserts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angel food cake Frozen fruit bars Fruit and flavored water ices Hard candy Homemade treats with no milk Gelatin Most fruit roll-ups and other fruit-type snacks Popsicle® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial cakes, cookies, donuts, or mixes with milk Custard Frozen yogurt Ice cream made with milk Pie crust with butter or margarine Pudding Sherbets

What about foods outside of the home?

School/Daycare—Do the following:

- Ask your child's school/daycare about their allergy action plan.
- Tell the school/daycare about your child's allergies.
- Give the school written allergy information.
- Provide them with emergency contact information.
- Give them a photo of your child.

Everywhere—Teach your child the following:

- Which foods are safe and unsafe
- Not to trade food with others
- Not to eat any food with unknown ingredients
- What their allergic symptoms are
- How and when to tell an adult about allergy-related problems
- How to read food labels

Eating out can be a challenge with a milk allergy.

Many foods have milk products added for binders or thickeners, or as a main ingredient. Here are some tips to remember when eating out:

- Inquire about all menu items and food preparation before ordering.
- Be aware of cross-contamination. For example: serving tongs for salad items, cooking utensils for multiple foods on the grill, etc.
- Find out if the meat is cooked on a grill that is also used for breaded items or dairy items (especially cheese).
- Ask if it can be cooked on a piece of aluminum foil or in a clean pan.
- Choose menu items that do not contain breading or sauces.

Milk Allergy Resources

- Food Allergy Research and Education
www.foodallergy.org
- Kids with Food Allergies
www.kidswithfoodallergies.org
- Utah Food Allergy Network
www.utahfoodallergy.org
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
www.aaaai.org
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
www.eatright.org
- Eating out information from Safe Fare
www.safefare.org

For additional information and questions please contact the Outpatient Dietitians at Primary Children's Hospital at 801.662.1601.

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