

LACTOSE FREE DIET TRIAL - CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS WHO ARE WEANED ONTO SOLIDS

You have been asked to trial your child on a strict lactose free diet. This will help your doctor decide if any of your child's symptoms are caused by an intolerance to the sugar in cow's milk (called lactose).

If symptoms are due to lactose intolerance, they will usually improve within two weeks of starting a strict lactose free diet. In children under 2, lactose intolerance is almost always temporary (for example after the gut has been damaged by a diarrhoea bug) – your child should be able to tolerate lactose again after 6-8 weeks on a lactose free diet. If a 2-week trial of lactose free diet does not improve symptoms, contact your GP or health professional for further advice.

Choosing foods for your child

Because lactose is found in cow's milk, any products containing milk will also contain lactose and should be avoided. The exceptions are 'lactose-free' milks, yoghurts, cheese and spreads, which have been made from milk, but the lactose has been removed. These lactose free foods will still be labelled as containing milk.

FOODS TO AVOID	LACTOSE FREE BRANDS
Infant formulas based on cow's or goat's milk	Lactose free formulas (SMA LF or Enfamil Lactofree) – these are made from cow's milk, but the lactose has been removed
Cow's milk (and milks from other animals e.g. goat/sheep)	Lactose free milks (e.g. Lactofree) or calcium fortified milk alternatives made from soya/oats/coconut
Cheese (including goat, sheep and buffalo cheeses)	Lactose free cheeses (e.g. Lactofree), soya, coconut or rice cheeses
Yoghurt/fromage frais	Lactose free yoghurts (e.g. Lactofree) or soya/coconut/pea yoghurts
Butter or margarine	Lactose free spreads or vegetable oil/soya spreads
Cream/ice-cream/custard	Lactose free ice-cream and cream (e.g. Lactofree), soya/oat cream, soya/coconut/oat/rice ice cream, soya custard, and some brands of fruit sorbet
Chocolate	Soya chocolate/some standard dark chocolate

Hidden sources of lactose

Milk is used as an ingredient in many pre-packaged food and drinks. Common items which may contain milk include: bread, biscuits, baby foods, processed meat and fish, crisps, sauces, breakfast cereals, sweets and ready meals. Any packaged food made in the UK or Europe must include milk in the list of ingredients if it has been used in the product. Do not give your child any food or drink which lists milk as an ingredient.

Lactose is sometimes added to over the counter or prescription medicines – check the information leaflet carefully.

Checking labels

It is important to read the food ingredient label carefully before giving any packaged food to your child. Check the ingredients list for any of the following: butter, casein, cheese, cow's milk, cream, curd, evaporated milk, fromage frais, ghee, ice cream, lactoglobulin/lactoalbumin, lactose, margarine, milk solids, skimmed milk powder, whey, yoghurt.

Avoid foods from buffets, delicatessen counters or in-store bakeries. These are not labelled with ingredients though stores must be able to tell you the ingredients if you ask.

Don't forget calcium!

Milk products provide most of the calcium in our diet. Children need plenty of calcium to form strong bones and teeth for later life. While your child is on a lactose free diet, they will need to eat other sources of calcium, or take a calcium supplement.

AGE	DAILY CALCIUM NEEDS
<1 year	525mg
1-3years	350mg

As a rough guide, if your child is drinking less than a pint of lactose free infant formula or lactose free milk daily, they may need a calcium supplement.

Choosing a suitable milk for your child

Lactose free infant formulas (Enfamil Lactofree or SMA LF) are available for children under 1 year for use as a main drink. Supermarket full fat lactose free milks or Alpro Soya Growing Up Milk can be used as a main drink over the age of 1. However most other soya, oat or nut milk alternatives are not suitable as a main drink for children under 2. Lactose free milk or other milk alternatives (e.g. soya, rice or oat milks) can be used in cooking. Always choose one which is fortified with calcium. Other animal milks (e.g. goats milk) are not suitable, because they also contain lactose.

What is the difference between lactose intolerance and cow's milk protein allergy?

Lactose intolerance is not an allergic reaction, it is a usually temporary inability to digest the sugar (lactose) in cow's milk. The main symptoms of lactose intolerance are diarrhoea and bloating. Cow's milk protein allergy is an allergic response to the protein in cow's milk. Symptoms can be severe and immediate (rash, difficulty breathing, vomiting), or delayed (stomach pains, diarrhoea, blood in poo). Children with cow's milk allergy cannot eat lactose free products because they still contain cow's milk protein. Occasionally mums who are breastfeeding infants with severe cow's milk allergy will need to avoid cow's milk in their diet too.

This diet sheet gives short term advice on a lactose free diet. If your child needs to stay on a lactose free diet, you should be referred to a paediatric dietitian for further advice.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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