What you really need to know about feeding your milk intolerant child.

Helpful hints from SMA Nutrition

SPECIAL FEEDS FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS
Introduction.

This booklet has been given to you by your doctor, health visitor or dietitian, because your child has a form of 'cow's milk intolerance', for which you are using a soya infant formula as part of the treatment.

It sets out to explain the ins and outs of this condition, what causes it, and most importantly what you can do to help. Prepared by people with experience of milk intolerant children and motherhood, this booklet is full of realistic and practical information. However, it is not intended to replace the advice given by your healthcare professional.

As we aim to constantly improve the quality of the booklets and information we offer to mums and dads, your feedback is greatly appreciated. If you have any tips you think other parents would find useful, or comments on how we could improve this booklet, you can write to us or ring the SMA Careline. See the back of this booklet for more information.

Q. What is cow's milk intolerance?

A. This is the term used when your child has difficulty in tolerating or digesting one or more of the ingredients in cow's milk. It is a common problem - in the UK it is estimated that around 6% of children under the age of 5 are affected. Fortunately it is rarely serious and can easily be dealt with. There are two types of cow's milk intolerance - cow's milk protein allergy and lactose intolerance.

Q. What is cow's milk protein allergy?

A. Cow's milk protein allergy is when there is an allergic reaction to the protein in cow's milk. If your child has this problem, a variety of allergic symptoms may arise, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, asthma and atopic eczema. Your doctor will have made this diagnosis after assessing these symptoms. The treatment for this condition is to completely remove cow's milk and all cow's milk based products from the diet.
Q. How long does this condition last?

A. In many cases children grow out of this condition by the age of 1, and most become tolerant to cow’s milk protein by the time they are 5. However, a small number of children remain allergic beyond this age. Recovery from cow’s milk allergy is slower than from lactose intolerance. You must not re-introduce cow’s milk into your child’s diet without the advice of your doctor.

Q. What is lactose intolerance?

A. Lactose intolerance is when a child is unable to digest lactose, the natural sugar found in cow’s milk — and this undigested lactose may cause diarrhoea and/or colic. To relieve these unpleasant symptoms and ensure adequate growth, it is essential to remove all lactose from your child’s diet. As lactose is found in cow’s milk, this means excluding cow’s milk and all cow’s milk products. It is important to note that this includes all standard infant formulas because they are based on cow’s milk.

Q. How long does lactose intolerance last?

A. Lactose intolerance is usually a temporary condition lasting from a few weeks to several months. At the appropriate time, your doctor will advise you when, and how, you should re-introduce cow’s milk.

Q. How do I remove the cow’s milk in foods, but make sure my child still receives adequate nutrition?

A. Although your child is unable to tolerate cow’s milk and those foods which contain it, it is essential to continue to provide adequate nutrition for growth and development. Milk is an important source of nutrition for children, and when either infant milk or cow’s milk is excluded from the diet, it is vital to replace it with a nutritionally complete milk substitute. Your doctor will be able to recommend a suitable formula for your baby, such as an SMA soya infant formula.
Q. What are soya infant formulas?
A. Instead of being based on cow's milk like ordinary infant milks, soya infant formulas are based on soya protein - therefore these formulas contain no cow's milk protein or lactose. Because they are nutritionally complete, they can be used as the sole source of nutrition for the first few months of life and should be used just like ordinary infant milks.

Q. If my child's problem is lactose intolerance what can I give her?
A. You can give her soya infant formula, or you can use a lactose free baby milk like SMA LF*. These milks are specially formulated to be nutritionally complete and are suitable for use from birth. The recipes later in the booklet can be made using either soya infant formula or SMA LF - depending on which is recommended for your child to use - simply replace the SMA soya infant formula with SMA LF.

Q. Which foods should I avoid if my child is cow's milk intolerant?
A. Many foods are made from cow's milk or contain cow's milk and they should be avoided. Some of these foods are obvious, such as cheese, butter, yoghurt and cream, but many are not so easy to identify and therefore it is important that you receive detailed dietary advice from your dietitian or health visitor. Manufactured foods generally have a list of ingredients printed on the package. Avoid foods that contain any of the ingredients listed below.

Butter, casein, caseinates, hydrolysed casein, cheese, cream, lactose, margarine, milk, milk powder, skimmed milk powder, milk solids, non-fat milk solids, whey syrup sweetener, yoghurt.

Although two products may look very similar, for example, different brands of rusks, one may be milk free and the other may not. It is therefore important that you always check the ingredients. Your dietitian or health visitor will be able to advise you on which foods to avoid, and on those foods which are suitable for inclusion in your child's diet, including suitable manufactured foods. If you are not sure whether a particular food is suitable, it's best to check this with your dietitian or health visitor before giving it to your baby.
Q. What about other foods?

A. Babies and young children who are intolerant to cow’s milk can sometimes develop intolerances to other foods. Do not give your baby any foods that you have been advised to avoid. It is important to know which foods to include and which to avoid in your baby’s diet, before you start weaning.

Q. What about weaning?

A. Weaning normally begins at about four months, and for those children still requiring a cow’s milk free diet, soya infant formulas can continue to be used as part of a mixed diet, either as a drink, or mixed with solids. Usually you start by introducing foods pureéd or sieved to give a thin, smooth consistency. Suitable foods include pureéd fruit or vegetables or baby rice made up with reconstituted soya infant formula or cooled, boiled water.

**Warning:** Many health food shops and supermarkets sell soya milk. You should not replace soya infant formula with one of these milks, as they are NOT nutritionally complete and are unsuitable for babies and young children.

**Weaning tips**

When you introduce solids into the diet, you are teaching your child to eat and enjoy foods with different tastes and textures. This will take time and patience; go at your child’s pace and you will learn together.

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**Do’s**

- Offer only one or two teaspoons of solid foods at first to accustom your baby to a change in texture and taste.
- If your child is very hungry or thirsty, offer a small amount of your baby’s usual milk before the solids.
- Teach your child to enjoy a variety of foods but only introduce one new food at a time.
- Encourage your baby to drink from a beaker or cup from 6 months.
- Once your child can handle a spoon, meal times will become more messy but be patient and allow your baby to experiment.
- The food you offer your child should look attractive. Serve it in colourful dishes, not directly from jars or tins.
- Use as many home-prepared foods as possible by sieving, mashing or liquidising them to a suitable texture.

**Don’ts**

- Never leave your child alone when feeding as there is a risk of choking.
- Try not to hurry your child at meal times.
- Although some of the foods may appear bland, do not be tempted to add sugar or salt.
- Never add solids to your baby’s bottle.
- Make sure that you do not offer food that is too hot for your child.
- Don’t spend a lot of time persuading your child to eat. Once a food is definitely refused, it is best to call an end to the meal.
- It is not a good idea to try new food at times when your baby is over hungry, tired or fretful.
- Don’t use bottles or beakers as comforters or pacifiers.

If you want to know more about weaning, call the SMA Careline for our “Weaning can be fun” booklet.