



For more information on allergy management contact Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

Call: 1300 728 000

Visit: www.allergyfacts.org.au

You can also visit the peak medical organisation, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA).

Visit: www.allergy.org.au



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Do you or someone you love have an allergy to cow's milk?





Cow's milk allergy



Cow's milk allergy is one of the more common food allergies in childhood with approximately two percent of children being cow's milk allergic. It is the proteins in cow's milk that cause allergic reactions in some people. An allergy to cow's milk means you are allergic to all cow's milk products including cheese, yoghurt, ice cream and most standard infant formulae.

Most children with cow's milk allergy also have an allergy to goat's milk and milk from other animals, as the proteins causing the allergic reaction are very similar.

Cow's milk allergy is different to lactose intolerance which is an inability to digest the sugar (lactose).

Allergic reactions

- Mild to moderate allergic reactions can include hives, worsening eczema, abdominal pain and/or vomiting.
- A small number of infants have severe allergic reactions that affect breathing and/or the circulation. These infants may develop difficult/noisy breathing, coughing and/or suddenly become pale and floppy.
- Allergic reactions most often occur soon after the milk is consumed or up to about 2 hours after. Infants who have severe reactions, often but not always, have hives, facial swelling and/or vomiting as early signs of an allergic reaction.
- Even very small amounts (i.e. a drop of cow's milk) can cause severe allergic reactions in some infants.



Proper diagnosis

- Anyone with a suspected cow's milk allergy should see their GP. Most children with cow's milk allergy will be referred to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist.
- Infants who are being breastfed should continue breastfeeding. In rare cases a medical specialist may advise mothers to remove cow's milk from their diet when breastfeeding if their child does have cow's milk allergy. Any removal of food from a mother's diet when breastfeeding should be guided by a medical doctor or specialist paediatric dietitian. Some infants may require a specialised formula that does not contain cow's milk proteins.



- In some cases, a medically supervised challenge to milk in a baked product (e.g. a muffin) will be offered to your child. About 70% of children with cow's milk allergy can tolerate milk in a baked product. You should not try this at home if your child has been diagnosed with a cow's milk allergy – severe reactions can occur. Discuss with your doctor.

When breastfeeding is not an option

There are a range of formulae available including extensively hydrolysed cow's milk based formulae, amino acid formulae, rice based formulae and soy formulae. Be aware that some infants with cow's milk allergy are also allergic to soy milk. Speak to your doctor about the best option for your infant.

Management of milk allergy

- Management involves avoiding cow's milk and products that contain cow's milk as an ingredient. Avoiding products containing cow's milk can be challenging when trying to maintain adequate growth and nutrition. Infants with cow's milk allergy should be under the care of a medical specialist and a specialist paediatric dietitian. Ingredient lists of all foods need to be read on every occasion. In Australia and New Zealand any foods containing cow's milk as an ingredient in any form must list it in the ingredient list. If purchasing a food without an ingredient list always disclose the allergy and ask for allergen ingredient information.

Foods that contain cow's milk

Some foods which should be avoided are milk/A2 milk, lactose-free milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, ghee, ice cream, buttermilk, cream fraiche and milk powder, as they contain cow's milk. Foods containing the milk proteins casein, caseinate and whey must also be avoided.

Cow's milk may be an ingredient in food products such as sausages, non-dairy cheese, sauces, gravy, spreads, soups, mashed potato, deli meats, basted meats, dark chocolate and herbal medicines or supplements. Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia's Milk Allergen Card and Cow's Milk Allergy Help Sheet and the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy Cow's Milk Diet Sheet provide more helpful information.

See www.allergyfacts.org.au and www.allergy.org.au

