

# Milk Free Diet for Breastfeeding Mums

## Advice for Parents and Carers



**Breastfeeding provides the best source of nutrition for babies.** Occasionally, breastfed babies can react to cow's milk from the mother's diet. If your baby has symptoms, you will need to follow a strict, milk/dairy free diet for up to 4 weeks. After this, a trial reintroduction of cow's milk into your diet is likely to be required to confirm the diagnosis of cow's milk allergy. If your baby's symptoms return, then the diagnosis is confirmed, and you will need to continue with a milk/dairy free diet whilst breastfeeding. Please discuss with your GP. If you have any other allergies or medical conditions, please seek further advice.

**It is important to have a milk/dairy free diet,** and to also avoid major sources of soya as many babies who cannot tolerate cow's milk also react to soya proteins. Soya can often be tried later to see if your baby reacts to it or not, but it is best not to include it for the first 4-6 weeks. You will need to avoid cow's milk, soya milk and any products that contain these such as dairy and soya cheese/yogurts/custards/desserts. Products containing "soya lecithin" or "soya flour" in products such as bread and sausages can still be eaten. Milk free recipes can be found at: [Milk free recipes](#)

Do not use other mammalian milks (from 4-legged animals such as goat, sheep, camel and buffalo) as their milk protein structure is similar to cow's milk and may still cause an allergic response.

**Suitable alternatives to cow's milk and soya milk:** Calcium enriched oat, pea or hemp milk, calcium enriched nut milks e.g. coconut, almond, hazelnut, cashew.

	Milk and soya free foods	Foods to Avoid / check labels
<b>Fruit &amp; vegetables</b>	All plain fruit and vegetables - fresh, dried, frozen or tinned	Vegetables mixed with sauces made from cows' milk Fruit mixed with ordinary yoghurt, custard, cream, ice-cream or soya alternatives
<b>Meat, fish, eggs, quorn, pulses</b>	Plain meat, fish, eggs, nuts and pulses Plain Quorn products ( <i>check labels</i> )	Meat, fish, eggs and pulses in a sauce made from cows' milk Processed/prepared meat/fish ( <i>check labels</i> ) Tofu
<b>Dairy products</b>	Calcium enriched milk alternatives can be used in cooking as well as in cereals e.g. oat milk, nut milks, coconut based yoghurts	Cows', goats' and sheep's, soya milk and all products made from these All cheeses, including cheese spreads, cream cheese, soya cheese Dairy or soya ice cream, cream and desserts
<b>Starchy food and cereals</b>	Bread/rolls/wraps/bagels/pitta/crackers if <b>no milk</b> in ingredients ( <i>soya in the ingredients is fine</i> ) Flour, plain pasta and rice Plain potatoes Plain breakfast cereals (oats, cornflakes, Weetabix, shredded wheat ( <i>check labels</i> ))	Bread/rolls/wraps/bagels/pitta/crackers with <b>milk</b> in ingredients list. Filled pasta/ravioli or rice in cows' milk-based sauces Processed potato products ( <i>check labels</i> ) Breakfast cereals which contain <b>milk</b>
<b>Other foods</b>	Any oils, lard, suet, dripping Dairy-free margarine e.g. Pure™, Vitalite™, Tomor™, Flora dairy-free, supermarket own dairy-free brand Kosher and some vegan spreads Milk free chocolate and spread	Standard butter, ordinary margarine or spread Biscuits and cakes that contain <b>milk</b> Milk chocolate, most chocolate spread Large quantity of soya spreads

### Ingredients to look out for on food labels:

Milk and milk products will be indicated as **'Milk'** in bold on the ingredient list, **so check the labels**. Most supermarkets will provide a list of their milk-free foods on request. There is no need to avoid all products with **'soya'** in the ingredients. Only avoid the main source of soya such as soya milk and yogurts, soya desserts and cream, soya cheese and tofu.

**Eating Out:** Check with the restaurant or food outlet as they must provide allergen information by law.

**Calcium:** As a breastfeeding mum, your daily calcium requirements are 1250mg. If this is not met from your diet, then you should take an over-the-counter supplement that provides 1000mg of calcium per day. *Use the following chart to check your calcium intake:*

Food	Average Portion	Calcium (mg)
Alternative milk (calcium fortified)	100ml	120mg
Sardines (with bones)	60g (1/2 small tin)	273-407
Pilchards	60g	150
Salmon (tinned with bones, pink)	106g (1/2 tin)	115
Scampi in breadcrumbs	90g	90
Whitebait	50g	430
Lentils, boiled	100g	19
Cooked chickpeas	50g	25
Peanuts	20g	18
Tahini	15g (1 tablespoon)	100
Quorn mince	100g	30
White bread	100g (2 large slices)	155
Wholemeal bread	100g (2 large slices)	106
Calcium fortified bread	40g (1 slice)	90
Pitta bread/chapatti	65g (1)	90
Calcium fortified cereals	30g	136-174
Calcium fortified hot oat cereals	15g (1 tablespoon dry cereals)	200
Broccoli, boiled	85g (2 spears)	36
Spring greens	75g (1 serving)	56
Curly kale	100g	150
Medium orange	120g (1 medium)	29
Dried apricot	5 apricots	20

*From the British Dietetic Association Food Fact Sheet on Calcium (June 2021) [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)*

### What about Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is needed by the body to absorb calcium and the best source is from the action of sunlight on the skin. Vitamin D is only found in a few foods so a supplement is recommended for everyone.

Target group	Recommended supplement (SACN 2016)	Do not exceed
Breastfeeding mothers	Equivalent to 10 micrograms /day or 400IU	100 micrograms /day

*NB micrograms (mcg) can also be written as µg. IU stands for International Unit.*

If your baby requires a cows' milk-free diet, then you may be referred to a Paediatric Dietitian or a trained Health Professional for advice on introducing solids and to ensure you are achieving a nutritionally adequate diet.