

Why a hypoallergenic formula?

Your baby has been prescribed a hypoallergenic formula as their symptoms suggest that they may have cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA). The protein in this specialised formula has been altered so that it is easier for your baby to digest and so should help to improve their symptoms. Hypoallergenic formula is suitable from birth, but only under medical supervision. There are two main types of hypoallergenic milk:

- **Extensively hydrolysed** (EHF) are the most frequently used feeds, suitable for the majority of babies with CMPA [Nutramigen®, Similac Alimentum®, Aptamil Pepti®, Althera®, Aptamil Pepti Syneo].
- **Amino acid formula**: may be prescribed, usually by a hospital consultant, for babies with severe CMA or multiple allergies [e.g. SMA Alfamino, Neocate LCP].

Hypoallergenic milks smell and taste very different to usual baby milks. Many babies change from their usual milk without any problem, for other babies the following advice may be helpful:

- wait until your baby is really hungry before trying the new formula
- serve in a bottle, feeder beaker or with a straw (depending on age)
- if possible, get someone else to feed the baby for the first few feeds
- unless there is anaphylaxis, try a gradual changeover mixing 1oz formula with 3oz usual baby milk, increasing quantities until the transition is complete.
- breast milk contains many enzymes so it is important to mix the formula with expressed breast milk *just before* giving it to your baby
- if baby is weaning, try mixing the formula with suitable weaning foods before offering it as a drink
- various recipe books for the hypoallergenic formula are available - ask your Dietitian for a copy
- Persevere: it may take 5-7 days for symptoms to improve
- Don't panic, it is quite common for baby's stools to turn green – this is normal

Prescriptions

Your initial prescription will usually be for 2 tins of hypoallergenic formula. This is to check that your baby tolerates the new feed and to prevent wastage if they don't. The quantity of formula required will change as your baby gets older and then starts to wean. Please discuss with your GP.

Need to confirm diagnosis

After your baby has been using the hypoallergenic formula for between 2-4 weeks and their symptoms have settled, it is really important to confirm the diagnosis to make sure that any improvement in symptoms is due to eliminating milk (and they have a cow's milk allergy) rather than for any other reason. You may be reluctant to do this especially if baby's symptoms have improved but this is a vital step to take.

- If your baby has **mild to moderate delayed symptoms** (usually non-IgE mediated) you can confirm the diagnosis at home. *'Home Milk Challenge: To confirm Cow's Milk Allergy in children with mild to moderate symptoms'*
- If your baby has **severe symptoms and/or an acute reaction** (usually IgE mediated) then they are likely to be under a hospital consultant. Please always follow the Consultant's advice and do not try home re-introduction until you are advised to do so.

Moving forward

Your baby should follow a strict cow's milk free diet until about 9-12 months of age, or 6 months after diagnosis.

- 'Milk free diet for babies'
- If you are breastfeeding and have cut out cow's milk protein, then you will also need the leaflet 'Milk free diet for breastfeeding Mums'. Milk free recipe leaflets are also available.

After this age, as most children grow out of CMPA you are advised to reintroduce cow's milk to see if they have acquired tolerance and are no longer allergic to the milk proteins.

- If your baby has mild-moderate delayed symptoms this can be done at home using the 'milk ladder'. 'The Milk Ladder: Has my baby grown out of Cow's Milk Allergy?'
- Babies with **moderate-severe eczema, a diagnosed IgE allergy or immediate symptoms** should be referred to a paediatric allergy clinic for the reintroduction stage.

Stopping the hypoallergenic formula

Prescriptions for hypoallergenic formula can be stopped when your child has outgrown the allergy and they are able to drink cow's milk or eat yoghurts/cheese made with cow's milk. The formula may also be stopped on the advice of your Dietitian/paediatrician or when your child is old enough to take suitable alternative milk/milk products.

Supporting you

Some babies with CMPA may also react to soya proteins so they will need to avoid soya milk/products. If you would like extra support or advice, especially if your baby has multiple allergies or you need support with weaning or following the 'milk ladder', please ask to be referred to your local paediatric Dietitian.

Information sheets available on the below links

- [Milk free diet for breastfeeding Mums](#)
- [Milk free diet for babies](#)
- [Milk free recipes](#)
- [Home Milk Challenge: To confirm Cow's Milk Allergy in children with MILD to MODERATE symptoms](#)
- [The Milk Ladder: Has my baby grown out of Cow's Milk Allergy?](#)

Support and Advice

Allergy UK www.allergyuk.org

Helpline: 01322 619898

Email: info@allergyuk.org

NHS information leaflet: What should I do if I think my baby is allergic or intolerant to cow's milk?

<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/childrens-health/what-should-i-do-if-i-think-my-baby-is-allergic-or-intolerant-to-cows-milk/>

National Breastfeeding Helpline (English, Welsh and Polish) 0300 100 0212

Apps



Breast Start: An App that gives you evidence based information from NHS professionals about all aspects of breastfeeding



Baby Buddy: Award-winning app for parents and parents-to-be who will guide you through your pregnancy and the first six months of your baby's life