

Child Health Information

Allergy Clinic Pre-appointment advice for Children & Young people: Milk Allergy

What is Allergy?

An allergy occurs when your immune system, which normally fights infection, overreacts to a substance called an allergen. Most allergens are normally harmless and do not affect people who are not allergic to them. Allergic reactions can vary from mild to life-threatening. This leaflet covers allergens such as fish, shellfish, soya, sesame, pollen, animals, mould and latex. We have specific leaflets for support with nut, egg and general allergy.

When someone comes into contact with something that they are allergic to (an allergen), a group of cells called mast cells, release a substance called histamine. Histamine causes the tiny blood vessels in the tissues of the body to leak fluid which causes the tissues to swell. This results in a number of different symptoms, which are discussed in more detail later in this advice sheet. Sometimes it is difficult to know what is causing allergic reactions and for some children and young people allergic reactions can occur with no obvious cause.



What is Milk Allergy?

Some people cannot tolerate milk in their diet. This may be due to an allergy or intolerance to milk protein or from an inability to digest the sugar (lactose) found in milk. This information sheet is mainly for those who get problems with milk protein.



Most people who have a problem with cow's milk will also get symptoms with sheep's and goat's milk. This information sheet gives ideas about foods which may contain milk.

What can I do to keep myself or my child safe?

While you are waiting for your specialist allergy appointment, it is important to be aware of how you can keep your child safe until you are seen in clinic and given a diagnosis.

If you think your child has reacted to milk, **avoiding all dairy** is a sensible precaution until your child can be seen for their allergy consultation. This would involve avoiding actual milk and also includes any food that may contain milk.

Where is milk found?

In order to discover which foods contain your suspect allergen you will need to **read the ingredients list** of any packets of foods that your child may eat, or ask in restaurants if your child's food is likely to contain the allergen you are concerned about. Many restaurants now have websites with allergen listings for any food served in their establishment, or will have a folder onsite containing such information.

The most obvious sources of milk are **dairy products** e.g. **butter, yoghurt, cheese**. A lot of other foods also contain milk as an ingredient, such as;

- Cake or confectionary that contains the food
- Sauces that contain the food
- Some curry sauces or oriental foods – particularly Chinese and Thai food
- Cereals that contain the food

Supermarkets can provide lists of milk-free products. The term 'non-dairy' used on ice-cream or coffee creamers etc., does not necessarily mean it is milk-free. **Always check the ingredients list:**

All pre-packaged foods in the UK must declare on the label or ingredients list whether a product contains the most common food allergens. These will be highlighted in **bold** text in the ingredients list. The allergens which must be highlighted on the ingredients list are:

Nuts, Peanuts, **Milk**, Eggs, Fish, Shellfish, Molluscs (Mussels, Clams etc) Soya, Celery, Sulphites, Sesame, Mustard, Cereals (Wheat, Oats etc) or Lupin.

The allergy clinic also has specific advice leaflets about nut, egg and general allergies. These can be found on the RUH website patient and visitor section.



Foods allowed on a Milk free diet	Foods to check ingredient labels	Foods to avoid on a Milk free diet
Fruit, vegetables and potatoes		
Fresh, frozen, canned, stewed and dried fruit, fruit juice, and vegetables. Plain crisps.	Vegetable/potatoes in sauce or dressing, instant mash, coleslaw, potato products, baked beans. Flavoured crisps. Corn and maize based snacks e.g. Wotsits, Doritos.	Potato mashed with milk or butter. Cauliflower cheese.
Bread, cakes and biscuits		
Most bread. Home-made cakes made with milk-free spread, meringue (no cream), milk free cakes/biscuits. Icing.	Muffins, crumpets, tea cakes, crackers, pitta bread, waffles. Any biscuits, cereal bars or cakes. Fondant filling.	Milk bread, Naan bread, brioche, croissants, garlic bread, pizza, Danish loaf. Chocolate coated biscuits, shortbread. Butter cream.
Pasta and grains		
Pasta, macaroni, spaghetti. All flour, grains and rice	Tinned pasta (spaghetti) in tomato sauce	Macaroni cheese, Pesto sauce
Breakfast cereal		
Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Cornflakes, Frosties, Rice Krispies, Ricicles, Sugar Puffs, Bran Flakes, porridge.	Swiss style muesli, chocolate flavour cereals, Ready Brek. Other cereals (check label).	Special K Instant porridge
Meat and poultry		
Fresh and/or frozen meat and poultry. Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) e.g. soya,	Sausages, burgers, tinned meat, processed meat, sandwich and deli ham. Paté and meat paste. Meat coated in breadcrumbs, Quorn products.	Meat in batter. Butter basted chicken/turkey. Meat pies.
Fish		
Fresh and frozen fish and seafood without coating or sauce.	Tinned fish, fish in breadcrumbs, fish paste and paté, fish fingers, fish cakes.	Fish in white cream sauce, fish in batter.



Foods allowed on a Milk free diet	Foods to check ingredient labels	Foods to avoid on a Milk free diet
Eggs		
Boiled, poached, fried, baked eggs.	Scotch eggs, Quiches	Omelette and scrambled eggs made with milk/butter.
Soups, sauces, pickles and seasonings		
Marmite, pepper, spices, herbs, pickles, vinegar, mustard.	Salad cream, salad dressing, mayonnaise, soup, instant sauces, sandwich spreads, ketchup, stock cubes	White sauce, cream sauce, cheese sauce.
Puddings		
Sorbet, jelly. Custard, blancmange, milk pudding made with milk substitute e.g. soya milk	Fruit pie, fruit crumble, soya desserts, dairy free ice desserts (e.g.; Swedish glace®), lemon meringue pie, (ice cream must contain some milk, ice desserts may be milk-free).	Milk pudding, cheesecake, trifle, mousse, instant desserts, ice cream including 'Non-dairy' ice cream, crumbles/sponges made with butter or margarine.
Confectionary, snacks, spreads and other foods		
Sugar, jam, honey, syrup, boiled sweets, plain crisps & popcorn, marshmallows, lollies. Peanut butter.	Lemon curd, chewy sweets, plain chocolate, mints. Ice lollies. Flavoured crisps	Chocolate spread, milk chocolate, butterscotch, fudge, toffee. Toffee popcorn
Drinks		
Milk substitute e.g.; soya milk Cocoa, milk shake syrup, pure fruit juice, fruit squash.	Drinking chocolate, Horlicks®, Ovaltine®, some drinks with added calcium, milk shake powder.	Instant milk drinks, milk shakes



What should I look out for if my child or I have a reaction to something?

Symptoms can vary considerably in allergy, and each reaction can be different.

The **milder symptoms** could include;

- Itchy 'nettle type' rash – sometimes described as hives
- Tingly itchy feeling in the mouth
- Feeling sick or nauseous.

More **serious symptoms** could include;

- Swelling around the face/mouth or throat
- Difficulty swallowing or speaking
- Sudden severe asthma/breathing difficulties
- Abdominal pain, sudden vomiting
- Feeling faint or losing consciousness.

Are there any medications that could help?

You should obtain antihistamine syrup or tablets such as Chlorphenamine or Cetirizine. Your GP can prescribe this medication or for older children these are available without prescription (e.g. Piriton[®], Piriteze[®], Zirtek[®]). Keep antihistamine with you and your child at all times. Having this medication available is a way to keep safe and gives you reassurance that you can support your child if they become unwell. If your child has an asthma inhaler they should also have that with them at all times. Your GP or Pharmacist can give advice on other medications such as nasal sprays or eye drops.

What should I do if my child or I have a reaction to something?

If your child has a reaction to something, try and keep as calm as you can. In the first instance, giving them the age appropriate dose of the antihistamine should help them if the symptoms are mild. You should then seek medical advice from your GP, NHS 111, Out of Hours service or Minor injuries Unit if symptoms do not improve or worsen.

If at any point you are worried that symptoms seem to be getting severe, you should seek urgent medical advice by calling NHS 111.

Should the symptoms involve breathing difficulties or a loss of consciousness, call 999 and tell the ambulance service that your child has had an allergic reaction and describe the child's symptoms.

The details of any allergic reaction to an allergen provide more information towards discovering the likely cause of the allergy. Any information you can remember after getting medical help can be useful, such as:

- Photos
- Food diary
- Description of what symptoms occurred and their severity
- What your child was eating at the time of reaction or earlier that day
- Whether your child was already unwell on the day of the reaction.

Useful Websites

The Anaphylaxis Campaign; www.anaphylaxis.org.uk Helpline number: 01252 542029

Allergy UK; www.allergyuk.org Helpline number: 01322 619898

NHS website; www.nhs.uk/conditions/Allergies

Examples of web-sites with milk free recipes: <http://www.vegansociety.com>

<http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org>

Thank you for taking the time to read this. The allergy team looks forward to meeting you in clinic.

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

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