



Dairy and Food Sensitivities in Babies



Many new moms have concerns that a milk or food allergy may be the cause of your infant's excessive crying or fussy behavior. It's important to remember that all newborn babies will go through a fussy period in the first three months of life. If you suspect a milk or food allergy is the reason for your baby's irritability, the following information may be helpful to you.

If your baby is experiencing an allergic reaction to a particular food, the following symptoms may be present:

- Hives
- Gas
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Excessive Crying and/or Irritable Behavior
- Mucous or blood in stool

The onset of symptoms after eating a problem food can vary from baby to baby. It may present itself immediately or have a delayed reaction of up to 24-48 hours. The most common types of foods that cause sensitivities in babies are protein foods. The foods that cause the most allergies include: cow's milk, soy, nuts (especially peanuts and almonds), red berries, and tomatoes. A food protein intolerance will usually occur between 2 and 6 weeks of age. Cow's milk protein accounts for 50-65% of food allergy cases in infants. If a cow's milk protein allergy is suspected, some doctors recommend switching to a hypoallergenic formula, or suggest an elimination diet for nursing moms. Studies have shown that there are several other treatment options that can be helpful to babies experiencing food protein intolerances.

Probiotics can be very helpful for babies with a protein intolerance. The most effective probiotic for this situation is one that contains Lactobacillus Reuteri. In one study, 90 breastfed, colicky infants were randomly assigned to receive either a Lactobacillus Reuteri probiotic or Mylicon (Simethicone) drops



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daily for 28 days. Mothers were also asked to avoid cow's milk in their diets. 95% of those babies had improvement in their food protein intolerance in comparison to only 7% of babies in the Simethicone group within 1 week of treatment. Bio Gaia Lactobacillus Reuteri liquid probiotic drops was the product referenced in the study. These drops are readily available online and in many retailers, so you check locally where you live.

The use of lactase enzymes has also been studied. These studies have shown significant reduction in lactose intolerance in babies whose milk is treated with the enzyme. These digestive enzymes can help babies better digest lactose contained in breast milk or formula. Colief Infant Drops are a commonly used product and can be found in many retailers and pharmacies.

An elimination diet is another popular suggestion among doctors and lactation specialists. Most of these diets revolve around removing any food that contains cow's milk protein (cow's milk, yogurt, cheese, etc.). Be sure that you do not replace your milk products with soy products as more than 50% of babies will have the same allergic reaction to soy if they are sensitive to cow's milk. A good replacement to milk products may be to switch to rice milk. Other offending foods are chocolate, strawberries, tomatoes and nuts. Try removing these items for one week if you are nursing to see if your infant's symptoms subside. It may take some babies up to 10-14 days for milk proteins to completely clear from their systems. Most mothers will notice a difference in one week if milk allergy was the culprit. The process of following an elimination diet may be difficult for some mothers.

If you suspect any milk or food allergy, the first step is to check with your baby's doctor (or a lactation specialist if you are nursing). A doctor can order a fecal occult blood test that can look for blood in your baby's stool, which could be an indication of food protein intolerance. Before removing important and healthy food from your diet, please seek your doctor or (if breastfeeding) a lactation consultant's advice to ensure there are no other underlying issues that may be causing your baby's fussiness and symptoms.



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