

THE MILK LADDER

A Step-by-Step Guide to Reintroducing Dairy into Your Child's Diet

Before you start please read the following and contact your dietitian if you have any questions:

- You should only commence the milk ladder if you have been advised to by your children's allergy doctor/dietitian, and you should follow their specific plan e.g. when to start, how quickly to progress and which steps to progress to.
- **DO NOT** attempt this milk ladder if your child has had any breathing problems, fainting or floppiness after having milk/milk products before
- Only commence the milk ladder when your child is healthy and symptom free - if your child has experienced symptoms in the past five days e.g. flare up of eczema, hay fever, upset tummy, or has taken antihistamines do not start the milk ladder. Wait for symptoms to settle before you start so that you are able to notice any changes that may occur when milk is introduced.
- If your child is avoiding other foods, please ask your doctor/dietitian for extra guidance on what foods to use for the milk ladder.

STOP the milk ladder if any of the following symptoms develop:

- Red, raised, itchy rash (consider using an antihistamine if you have used one before)
- Swelling where food has contacted (consider using an antihistamine if you have used one before)
- Breathing changes – noisy breathing / more congestion / wheeze
- Vomiting / significant tummy pain / significant increase in loose stools
- Dizziness / feeling faint / becoming floppy

In the unlikely event of breathing problems or faintness, please seek urgent medical attention. Do not re-challenge, and contact your allergy team/dietitian for further advice

Starting the Milk Ladder

Most children will outgrow their milk allergy, but the introduction needs to happen in a gradual way to get their body used to tolerating it. We start with well-baked milk, mixed with flour and other foods, as this is less likely to cause a reaction. We then gradually increase portion size of these foods, before introducing less well cooked dairy products.

- There are **6 steps** (Table 1) within the milk ladder, and **5 stages** (Table 2)
- For each step **work through the 5 stages** until your child can eat a 'typical' portion

Table 1: The SIX STEPS of the Milk Ladder (type of food given)



STEP 1 <i>Baked milk powder</i>	Biscuit (full portion = 1 biscuits)	- Homemade biscuit (see recipes) - Bought option: malted milk biscuit
STEP 2 <i>Baked whole milk</i>	Muffin (full portion = 1 muffin)	- Homemade muffin (see recipes) - Bought option: plain muffin/plain scone/milk loaf (bread)
STEP 3 <i>Less cooked milk</i>	Pancake / Yorkshire Pudding (full portion = 1)	- Homemade pancake / Yorkshire Pudding - Bought option: Buttermilk pancake / fresh Yorkshire Pudding (not frozen)
STEP 4 <i>Cheese</i>	Cheese (full portion = 15g)	- Stage 1: cooked cheese e.g. pizza, pasta bake, baked cheesy mash - Stage 2: cheese on own – grated / cubed
STEP 5 <i>Yoghurt</i>	Yoghurt (full portion = 125g pot)	Any yoghurt / fromage frais / custard
STEP 6 <i>Cow's milk</i>	Milk (full portion = 200ml)	- Under 1 years – standard infant formula - Over 1 years – pasteurised whole milk

Table 2: The FIVE STAGES of the Milk Ladder
(Amount of food given on steps 1-4)



	Portion	Time until next stage
STAGE 1	Pea size portion ~ 1g	We would recommend offering the food at each stage <u>once daily for a minimum of 3 days.</u> Some children may require more time to progress through each stage e.g. 7 days at each stage. This will be recommended by your dietitian/doctor before starting.
STAGE 2	Teaspoon size ~ 5g	
STAGE 3	¼ portion	
STAGE 4	½ portion	
STAGE 5	Full portion	

- We would recommend for Step 5 and Step 6 to introduce the dairy version into your child's alternative yoghurt/milk/prescribed formula one teaspoon at a time. For example: if your child eats soya yoghurts usually, add a teaspoon of standard yoghurt into their soya yoghurt for 3 days and continue increasing the quantity a teaspoon at a time.

What to do if you suspect a reaction or see a change in symptoms?

- If it is a severe reaction (see first page), stop the ladder and contact your dietitian/doctor
- **Mild symptoms are common on starting the ladder** – your child's body will need to adjust to consuming milk proteins again...think of it as our body getting used to a really spicy food, it takes a bit of time for your body to handle it. We recommend trying to continue with the milk ladder. Symptoms may also be unrelated to milk (e.g. teething, illness).
- If the symptoms persist, are mild-moderate, or you remain unsure if they are unrelated to milk then **return to the previous stage** that was tolerated by your child until the symptoms settle. Once settled, try to increase the stage again.
- If the symptoms return, go back to the previous stage again and contact your dietitian.
- If symptoms remain settled, continue progressing with the ladder.
- **AVOID** stopping the ladder completely as this stops your child building up tolerance. Remember any exposure (even just a pea size amount everyday) is helpful!

After the Milk Ladder

Well done! Your child can now tolerate dairy in all forms in their diet

- If your child was having an infant formula prescribed by the GP, this is no longer needed. Please tell your GP or dietitian so the prescription can be stopped.
- Please remember if your child is over 1 year old and moves from infant formula to cow's milk they will need to commence a multivitamin (containing vitamin A, C and D). Usually this is started when your child's formula intake is less than 500mls per day and is recommended to be given daily until 4 years old.
- If you have time, please do let us know that you have successfully completed the milk ladder - we always like to hear good news!