

Baby Basics



Cow's Milk Allergy

(NAPS)—Cow's milk allergy (CMA) is a severe food allergy that typically affects infants and toddlers. Symptoms can include constant crying, throwing up, refusal to eat, and severe rashes, and results in a sick, undernourished baby and anxious, discouraged parents.

"Sometimes, when babies are diagnosed with colic or reflux, parents' instincts often tell them that something else is wrong," says Steven Yannicelli, Ph.D., R.D., vice president of medical and scientific affairs for Nutricia North America. "Parents of children with cow's milk allergy often complain that it required months of persistence and education to finally get their child correctly diagnosed and treated. This is why it's so important to know the symptoms of a cow's milk allergy."

Common symptoms include:

- Diarrhea two to four times a day for more than five to seven days and/or blood in the stool;
- Vomiting beyond typical meal-time spit-up, especially if the baby also has difficulty swallowing;
- Skin rash and/or eczema, especially if it occurs along with the other symptoms;
- Inconsolable crying for long periods of time every day. Babies with CMA cannot be comforted because of pain in the gastrointestinal tract;
- Lack of proper weight gain. Most infants double their weight by six months and triple it by 12 months, but many with CMA lose nutrition through diarrhea and vomiting;
- Gassiness, when it occurs with the other symptoms;
- Respiratory problems such as wheezing, struggling to breathe, and excess mucus in the nose and throat; and



An answer to a sick, undernourished baby and anxious, discouraged parents may be to use a hypoallergenic formula in the infant's diet.

• Failure to thrive, due to dehydration, loss of appetite, and lack of energy that comes from a lack of proper nutrition.

If you suspect your child has CMA, talk to your child's doctor. For mothers who breast-feed their infant, it may mean changing their diet so the baby is no longer exposed to problem foods. If you're formula-feeding your child, you'll need to switch to one that doesn't contain any cow's milk proteins. Many infants who are allergic to milk also react to goat's milk and soy milk formulas. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children under 6 months of age should not drink soy milk formulas. A hypoallergenic, elemental formula, such as Neocate, which contains amino acids that are non-allergenic building blocks for all protein, can give your infant the nutrition he or she needs to grow and thrive and limits the chance of an allergic reaction.

For more information and to check out the Neocate Parent's Toolbox, with a symptom checker and an online diary, visit www.neocate.com.