

# Dietary advice for children who need to follow a dairy-free high energy diet

Dietetics

Produced: September 2025

Information for Parents & Carers

Review: September 2028

Leaflet number: 1658 Version: 2

## Introduction

Some children need to follow a high energy diet, if they are not growing as expected. This leaflet gives some ideas on how to follow a higher energy diet, for children who are also dairy free. Please talk with your doctor, nurse or dietitian before using this leaflet.

Some foods in this leaflet contain other common allergens like **nuts, eggs, soya and wheat**. Follow your dietitian's advice on avoiding or introducing or these in your child's diet.

## Top tips for following a dairy-free high energy diet:

- Add energy to meals with everyday foods (see page 3).
- Have drinks after meals. Drinks can be filling, and reduce appetite.
- Have a pudding after meals.
- Have snacks in between meals.
- Vegan foods are dairy-free. Both "dairy-free" and "vegan" are used in this leaflet.
- Calories are the measurement of energy in food or drink. You might see it written as 'kcal'. It is helpful to know which foods have more calories, and eat these regularly.

## Protein

Protein has many roles in the body. The body needs more protein when you are ill, injured, or after some medical treatments. You can still eat enough protein if you are dairy free. Aim to eat a palm sized portion of protein at every meal. Examples are meat, fish, beans, tofu, lentils, beans, chickpeas, nuts and seeds. Some high energy foods listed above, such as soy milk or yoghurt, nuts and hummus are also high in protein.

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## Choosing dairy free products

Many foods will naturally be dairy free. For example fruit and vegetables, rice, pasta, and plain meat or fish. Some foods are usually dairy free, but can contain milk. For example bread, instant noodles and crisps. You should always read the label of pre-packaged foods. By law, foods must have clear allergen labeling. Any of the 14 main allergens will be underlined or in **bold type** in the ingredients list. Look out for **milk** when reading in the ingredients list.

There are milk free alternatives to dairy products (like spreads, cheese, cream and milk). Supermarkets sell own brand 'free from' products, also brands like Alpro, Oatly, Violife and Pure. Some mainstream brands now make dairy free versions of their popular products.

## Choosing a milk alternative.

- First choice for a dairy free diet is often soya milk. It is the closest in energy and protein to cow's milk.
- If your child's diet is also soya free, then fortified oat or coconut milk are good alternatives. Example brands are Koko (Kids or Super or Vitamin milk), Alpro (Oat Growing Up)
- Nut milks like almond are low in energy and protein.
- Children under 5 years old should not be given rice drinks because of the levels of arsenic. They are also low in protein.

**Always read the label of your milk alternative to check it has been fortified with vitamins and minerals, including Calcium, Vitamin B12, Riboflavin and Vitamin D.**

- Some brands sell "growing up milk" for children aged 1 to 3 years old. These have added nutrients, including Iron and Vitamin C. However, they are not essential if your child eats a balanced diet. All children aged 6 months to 5 years should take vitamins A, C and D unless they drink more than 500ml formula each day.
- If your child is under 1 year old, you can use these alternatives in cooking. But their main drink should be breastmilk, or their prescribed specialist formula.

## Cooking tips

- Remember to add extra oil or vegetable spread when cooking.
- You can add ground nuts to foods like sauces, mashed potato, casserole or Bolognese.
- Try not to eat products described as low fat.
- Use dairy-free cream in the place of milk in cooking. For example, in mashed potato, fish pie and cauliflower cheese.

## Adding energy using everyday foods

Using the table below will help you add extra energy to foods and drinks, without having to increase portion sizes.

**\*Please note that whole nuts are not suitable for children under 5 due to choking risk.**

Food	Serving suggestions
Nut or seed butter or ground/flaked nuts and seeds (like peanut butter, ground almond or tahini)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick spread on toast, crackers or oatcakes</li> <li>• With sliced fruit or vegetables (like apples or carrots)</li> <li>• Added to porridge, yoghurt or cereals</li> <li>• Added to soups, stews, or sauces</li> <li>• Used in baking, like making flapjacks or cookies</li> </ul>
Hummus, avocado, guacamole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick spread on toast, chapatti, pitta or flatbread</li> <li>• Dip for raw vegetables or crisps</li> </ul>
Mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve with main meals (like sausages, chips or burgers)</li> <li>• Mix into sandwich or baked potato fillings, or pasta</li> </ul>
Vegan cheese and vegan cream cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On vegetables, pasta, beans, soup or potatoes</li> <li>• As a topping on lasagne, pie, pizza, pasta, casserole</li> <li>• On toast, crackers or alone as a snack</li> </ul>
Vegan cream or coconut milk (tinned, full fat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added to soups, pasta dishes, mashed potato, curries, sauces and dressings</li> <li>• Served with cakes, puddings and scones</li> <li>• Mix into smoothies, hot chocolate and shakes</li> </ul>
Vegetable oils or spreads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add extra when frying, roasting or grilling</li> <li>• Mix into dressings, soups and sauces</li> <li>• Thickly spread on toast, crumpets and tea cakes</li> <li>• Melted over vegetables, potatoes or added to mash</li> </ul>
Flaked or desiccated coconut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprinkled over porridge, cereal, yoghurt or ice cream</li> </ul>
Dried fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to puddings, sweet treats and yogurts</li> <li>• Add to porridge and cereals</li> <li>• Add to casseroles, tagines and stews</li> </ul>
Jam, marmalade, honey, syrup or vegan chocolate spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toast, scones, pancakes and crumpets</li> <li>• Porridge, yoghurt and rice pudding</li> </ul>

## Easy to prepare meal ideas

### Breakfast

- Porridge or Weetabix made with milk alternative. You can add nut / seed butter, dried fruit, marmalade, or jam.
- Toast with avocado or egg fried or scrambled with vegetable oil or spread.
- Toast with nut butters, honey or jam.
- Cereals with a milk alternative. Sprinkle with nuts, seeds and dried fruit.

### Lunch

- Jacket potato and vegetable spread with egg, tuna or chicken mayonnaise.
- Sandwiches made with chicken or tuna mayonnaise or beans/hummus and avocado.
- Pasta with chicken, egg, tuna and mayonnaise. Pasta with dairy-free pesto and vegetables.
- Omelette with vegetables roasted in vegetable oil.
- Soup with dairy free cream and cheese. Serve with dairy free sandwiches or bread with spread.

### Evening meal

- Meat or vegetable pie made with dairy free pastry with roasted vegetables.
- Oily fish such as salmon in fish pie, with milk alternative sauce.
- Curry or Dhal with added vegetable oil, coconut milk, oat or soya cream and/or ground nuts.
- Spaghetti Bolognese or cottage pie with added dairy free cheeses or creams.
- Stir fried rice, noodles or kedgeree with vegetable oils. Add meat, beans and/or vegetables.
- Some ready roll pastries are milk free. Add toppings such as dairy free cheeses, meats, and vegetables to make a milk free pizza or tart.

### Pudding

- Flapjacks made with dairy free baking spread.
- Fruit crumbles or pies made with dairy free vegetable spread or pastry.
- Dairy free ice cream, yoghurt, custard or blancmange with jelly or tinned fruit.
- Some ready roll pastries are milk free. Add toppings to make your own fruit pie or strudel.



## Snacks

Some high energy snacks like crisps, biscuits, cereals and cereal bars are naturally dairy free. Use supermarket websites or labels to find these. Also look in the free-from section of the supermarket. Homemade dairy free bakes tend to be higher energy, and can be cheaper than shop-bought.

- Milk free bread, naan or chapatti with thickly spread vegetable spread or vegetable oil
- Nuts and seeds (do not give whole to children under 5 years old)
- Crackers / breadsticks / oatcakes with hummus, avocado, nut butters or dairy free cream cheese
- Vegan yogurts
- Milk free crisps
- Scones with dairy-free butter, jam and dairy-free cream

Although sugar adds energy, it can cause tooth decay. Brush teeth twice a day, and make your child regular appointments with their dentist.

## Nourishing drinks

- Hot chocolate: add cocoa powder, or milk free hot chocolate powder, and/or malt powder to your child's milk alternative. You can also add vegan squirty cream or coconut cream.
- Smoothies or milkshakes: add dairy free yoghurt or ice cream. You can also add nut butters, coconut and fruit.

## Contact details:

Nutrition & Dietetics Department: **0116 258 5400**

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