

What To Expect When You Start a Hypoallergenic Formula



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Transitioning to a hypoallergenic formula can be challenging for some babies as it has a different sensory profile to standard formula or breastmilk. This transition should be made on the advice of your healthcare professional. To help with this transition we have summarised what to expect when transitioning your little one.

What is a Hypoallergenic Formula?

There are two main types of hypoallergenic formulas recommended for babies with a cow's milk protein allergy.

- 1. Extensively hydrolysed formulas:** these contain small chains of cow's milk protein, making it easier for the baby to digest and less likely their immune system will react to it.
- 2. Amino acid formulas:** these are totally milk-free formulas which are based on simple amino acid proteins.

➔ *Speak to your Paediatrician to discuss which formula is suitable for your baby*

✓ Formula Appearance:

- Hypoallergenic formulas tend to have a **thinner consistency and can appear less “milky”**. Do not be tempted to add extra powder to change the appearance unless advised by your healthcare professional; this is how it is supposed to look.

✓ Unique Smell & Taste:

- Due to their special formulation **hypoallergenic formulas will taste and smell different to standard infant formulas**. This is because the protein in the milk has either been broken down (for extensively hydrolyzed formula) or is now in the form of amino acids (for amino acid formulas). This is the reason for the new smell & taste, it is completely normal.
- Some babies do not notice the difference;** other babies may take a little longer to get used to the change. If so, try introducing gradually, make sure your baby is hungry/thirsty when first introducing the new formula. If your baby is over 6 months old and able to drink out of a cup, try offering from a covered cup (e.g. sippy cup).
- Persistence is key:** Some babies can take at least 15 tries before they accept a new taste.¹ It is recommended to stay on a new formula for at least 2 weeks as this allows time for your little one to adjust.
- Additionally, **a baby's acceptance of a new formula is largely dependent on the body language of their parents & primary carers**. Be sure to introduce the new formula in a relaxed environment, respond to your baby's cues, but **show that the formula is okay with positive body language** (for example, reassure with a smile, eye/body contact). If your baby turns their head away or rejects the bottle do not be tempted to force the bottle into their mouth. Instead wait for ten minutes before trying again or perhaps ask another family member to try, particularly if you are transitioning from breastfeeding or wish to offer a formula as a top-up to breastfeeds.

If you need further support talk to your baby's doctor or other healthcare professionals about how to make the transition more palatable and how to gradually move onto the new formula.

➔ *How to change the baby formula or toddler milk*



✓ Improvement in Dietary Management:

- After commencing a hypoallergenic formula, you can expect to see an improvement in your baby's allergy management within 3-14 days.²⁻⁴
- Some babies can take longer to improve than others. If you are concerned that the results are slow, talk to your healthcare professional for guidance.

✓ Increased Appetite:

- Your baby may start drinking larger amounts once their allergy management has started to improve. This is to be expected. Continue to feed on demand, unless otherwise directed by your healthcare professional.

✓ Changes in Stools:

- You may notice some initial changes in your baby's stools such as the **colour, consistency and/or smell**. Some changes like green stools will continue and are completely normal while on a hypoallergenic formula. These changes are a result of how the protein has been broken down or how the free amino acids have been digested.



If in any doubt, always contact your baby's healthcare professional for advice.

What about formulas with Syneo™?

A hypoallergenic infant formula powder with synbiotics or Syneo™, has additional friendly bacteria designed for infants with Cow's milk allergy. With this added ingredient, formulas with Syneo™ can have slightly different characteristics.

Below are some helpful callouts for these formulas specifically:

- ✓ **Changes in preparation:** It is important to always check the instructions on the label and follow them carefully. Formulas containing Syneo™ must be prepared using cooled boiled water – if you add Syneo™ powder directly to boiling water it may kill the friendly bacteria and stop them from working.
- ✓ **Stool changes:** Due to the special components in Syneo™ your baby's stools may have a different colour. Some may be green/yellow/tan/khaki this is normal. Colour can also change when solid foods are introduced into the diet. Stools may also become softer, more like breastfed infants.⁵
- ✓ **In the first few days/weeks of use your baby may also have more gas or flatulence, which may cause some temporary discomfort or fussiness.** This is due to your baby's gut adjusting to the new friendly bacteria. This should reduce after a few days and not persist beyond 2 weeks.

Our Nutricia Careline team of dietitians, nutritionists and midwives are here to help with any questions. Call us in AU on 1800 842 098 or NZ on 0800 438 500

References:

¹ Ventura AK & Worobey J. Current Biology. Early influences on the development of food preferences. 2013; 23(9): R401-R408

² Hill DJ et al. The natural history of intolerance to soy and extensively hydrolyzed formula in infants with multiple food protein intolerance. J Pediatr. 1999; 135:118-121.

³ Vanderhoof JA et al. Intolerance to protein hydrolysate infant formulas: An unrecognized cause of gastrointestinal symptoms in infants. J Pediatr. 1997; 131:741-744.

⁴ de Boissieu D et al. Allergy to extensively hydrolyzed cow milk proteins in infants: Identification and treatment with an amino acid-based formula. J Pediatr. 1997; 131:744-747.

BREASTMILK IS BEST FOR BABIES: Professional advice should be followed before using an infant formula. Partial bottle feeding could negatively affect breastfeeding. Good maternal nutrition is important for breastfeeding and reversing a decision not to breastfeed may be difficult. Infant formula should be used as directed. Improper use of infant formula may affect the health of the baby. Social and financial implications should be considered.

