



Food Intolerances in the Breast Fed Baby

Most mothers can eat anything they want without any type of reaction from their baby. Occasionally however, proteins present in a mother's diet may appear in her milk and may cause symptoms in her baby such as spitting up, fussiness, grunting, skin rashes / eczema, foul smelling gas, watery / mucous / bloody stools, infrequent stools, or respiratory congestion. The following foods are the most common foods to cause problems for a breast fed baby. Cow's milk protein is the most common culprit.

Dairy products	Peanuts	Fish	Corn
Soy products	Tree nuts	Chicken	Gassy vegetables:
Eggs	Chocolate	Beef	Broccoli Onion
Wheat	Caffeine	Citrus fruit	Cauliflower Green peppers
Prenatal vitamins with iron			Cabbage Tomatoes

When a food protein has been changed (denatured), as in cooking for example, there should be no problem. Usually a baby will react to a food within 6 hours of you eating it. The offending food is usually one that the mother eats a lot of. It sometimes takes up to two weeks for a food to get out of the mother's system.

If a food intolerance is suspected in a colicky breastfed baby, the mother has three options to consider:

1. **Eliminate all foods listed in the chart.** After a week or so, add one food back into your diet every couple of days and monitor how your baby reacts.
2. **Eliminate only one food at a time.** If your baby's symptoms improve after a few days without the suspected food, you may have found the culprit. Slowly reintroduce it in small amounts and monitor how your baby reacts.
3. **Eliminate ALL but a list of specific foods.** After about 2 weeks of a very restricted diet, gradually and systematically introduce food items back into your diet and monitor how your baby reacts. Ask for written instructions for this diet, called the "Modified Elimination Diet" if you are interested in trying it.

Some babies can tolerate small amounts of the offending food, but if not, discontinue the food item until your baby is older.

Be careful about eliminating too many things from your diet. Everyone will know someone whose baby got better when the mother stopped eating a certain food. Our diets are too complex to be sure exactly what, if anything, is affecting the baby.

Keep in mind that the fact that these proteins and other substances appear in the mother's milk is not usually a bad thing. Indeed, it is usually good, helping to desensitize your baby to these proteins.