

## Cow's Milk Free Diet for Mothers Whose Babies are Receiving Breastmilk

You have been asked to go on a cow's milk free diet because your baby may be allergic or unable to tolerate the protein found in cow's milk (cow's milk protein allergy, or CMPA). Providing breastmilk to your baby is very important, however, protein from the foods you eat can travel through your breastmilk to your baby. To continue to provide breast milk to your baby, you must not eat cow's milk based products.

### SOURCES OF MILK

Cow's milk protein is found in many foods. Example: cow's milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, cream, and ice-cream. There are also many foods that have hidden sources of cow's milk. It will be very important for you to read food ingredient labels to determine if hidden sources of milk are in the food.

### READING LABELS

- Make sure you read the ingredient list carefully to determine if there is a cow's milk-protein (key words to watch for: casein or whey) included in the product.
- Any food containing "milk" as an ingredient must be eliminated, even if the product says "may contain milk"; it must be avoided.
- If you are unsure of any food item, contact the manufacturer directly.

### GETTING ENOUGH CALCIUM AND VITAMIN D

It will be important for you to take care of your bone health while avoiding cow's milk. Calcium and Vitamin D are two important minerals milk is well known to include. It will be important to know how to get enough of these two minerals from other foods. You may need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements if unable to find other foods you like.

### DURATION OF COW'S MILK FREE DIET FOR MOTHERS

Most infants with cow's milk protein allergies "out-grow" the allergy by 2 years old. Research even says that 50% of children will no longer have a reaction to cow's milk protein by 1 year of age. You will need to continue a cow's milk free diet until your baby is no longer receiving your breast milk or your pediatrician says you can try to add small amounts in. It will be important to work with your pediatrician and/or dietitian when re-introducing cow's milk protein into your breastmilk or as a solid food.

### RESOURCES

Please review: Dietitians of Canada and Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition (PEN) handout "Milk-Free Eating Guidelines for Children with Milk Allergy" (2011); while you are providing your baby's food as breast milk, you will need to follow these restrictions and recommendations for your baby.

Your NICU Dietitian is available to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_