

IDENTIFYING MILK ALLERGENS

A milk allergy is an immune response to the proteins in cow's milk; milk is considered a key allergen under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Any food, food ingredient or ingredient component can cause severe allergic reactions, including life-threatening anaphylaxis, but most food allergies in Australia are caused by peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soy, lupin and wheat.

The Food Standards Code requires these foods to be declared on labels whenever they are present as ingredients or as components of food additives or processing aids, or made accessible to consumers when they ask for it if the food is not labelled.

There are two proteins in cow's milk that can cause an allergic reaction:

- casein (found in the "curd", the solid part of milk that curdles)
- whey (found in the liquid part of milk that remains after milk curdles)

A person may be allergic to only one milk protein or to both. Most (but not all) people who react to cow's milk will also react to sheep, goat and buffalo milk.

It is critically important that food businesses are aware of any allergens in the products they prepare and sell. To do so, Food Handlers must read the ingredient labels of all pre-made foods or ingredients that are used in the business.



IDENTIFYING MILK ALLERGENS



It is important to note that not all Food Handlers will be responsible for reading ingredient labels or determining which foods contain which allergens. Many food businesses delegate these responsibilities to the back-of-house employees who prepare or cook the food. This is done under the supervision of a kitchen manager who coordinates how this information is:

- recorded and stored
- communicated to other Food Handlers or managers
- communicated to customers (e.g. explicitly stated on the website or on menus, available in writing to any customer that asks or through customer-employee interactions)

Food businesses should avoid using any products that do not have an ingredient list, and should be aware that manufacturers may occasionally change their recipes or use different ingredients for variations of the same product.

Some products use other names for milk on their labels. If you see any of the “other names for milk” in the list of ingredients on a product, you should assume that the product contains the allergen.

Other names for milk

- ammonium/calcium/magnesium/potassium/sodium caseinate
- casein/caseinate/rennet casein
- curds
- delactosed/demineralised whey
- dry milk/milk/sour cream/sour milk solids
- hydrolysed casein, hydrolysed milk protein
- lactalbumin/lactalbumin phosphate
- lactoferrin
- lactoglobulin
- milk derivative/fat/protein
- modified milk ingredients
- fat replacers (e.g. Opta™, Simplese®)
- whey, whey protein concentrate

IDENTIFYING MILK ALLERGENS



Some foods and products that contain (or may contain) milk

- artificial butter, butter fat/flavour/oil, ghee, margarine
- baked goods and baking mixes
- breads, breadcrumbs
- battered fried foods
- brown sugar
- buttermilk, cream, dips, salad dressings, sour cream, spreads
- caramel colouring/flavouring
- casein in wax used on fresh fruits and vegetables
- casseroles, frozen prepared foods
- cereals, biscuits, cookies, crackers
- cheese, cheese curds, cheese powder
- chocolate, carob
- desserts (e.g. custard)
- egg/fat substitutes
- flavoured coffee, coffee whitener, non-dairy creamer
- imitation milk
- glazes, nougat
- gravy, sauces
- high protein flour
- kefir (milk drink), kumiss (fermented milk drink), malt drink mixes
- food preservatives (e.g. nisin)
- probiotic drinks
- protein shakes
- processed meats (e.g. luncheon, sausages)
- pizza
- instant/mashed/scalloped potatoes
- seasonings
- snack foods
- soups, soup mixes
- soy “cheese”

Note: This is not a complete or comprehensive list of ingredients to avoid. Food and food products purchased from other countries are not always produced using the same manufacturing and labelling standards as in Australia.