

OATLY WEBINAR

WORRIED ABOUT DAIRY-FREE WEANING? A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING WITHOUT COW'S MILK

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Answers to unanswered questions:

Q1: Would someone vegan get all the requirements from food? And would you recommend a vegan diet for babies or children?

A1: The British Dietetic Association published a [statement](#) that well-planned vegan diets can support healthy living in people of all ages, which is in line with the [position paper](#) by the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

The Vegan Society guides about pregnancy, breastfeeding and childhood are available [here](#), including information about fortified foods and supplementation. Also, First Steps Nutrition Trust provide a comprehensive guide about vegan under-fives [here](#).

Q2: We are seeing an increase in coconut allergy along with other allergens how often would you analyse a diet for these in children?

A2: In infants reporting ongoing symptoms, nutritional adequacy should be reviewed every few months via diet history as their dietary intake changes so quickly. In older children, it should be reviewed each time major changes to the diet are noted.

Q3: Would you support a breastfeeding mother to remove foods from her diet (other than cow's milk protein and soya) that she is claiming are causing an allergic reaction in her infant despite the lack of evidence yet for this?

A3: If there are clear indications that food allergy is present, then I would support egg and even wheat exclusion trials if the mother is intent on continuing to breast feed and able to manage such a diet. Strong evidence is unlikely to become available for allergies in infants of breastfeeding mothers, as it is not common for infants to react to allergens via breast milk and even less common to be multiply food allergic. Therefore, getting a large enough cohort to study would be very difficult. This should not stop us trying to support breastfeeding mothers from feeding their allergic child and in my experience does work, but it's not easy identifying the culprit allergens and it's not always the obvious food allergens.

Q4: What are key symptoms of nutritional deficiencies in infants?

A4:

- Poor growth/ weight gain
- Delayed physical and mental development, delayed speech
- Poor hair growth and dentition
- Changes in bowel habits
- Pallor
- Lethargy, irritability, poor sleeping
- Predisposition to illnesses
- Pica
- Hypocalcaemic seizures in vitamin D deficiency

Q5: What about the immature gut of a 4 month old and introducing food?

A5: COT (2016) concluded that early introduction of food allergens does not increase the risk of allergy or autoimmune disease. However, not recommended under 4 months of age.

Ref: Ierodiakonou D et al [JAMA](#). 2016 Sep 20;316(11):1181-1192. Timing of Allergenic Food Introduction to the Infant Diet and Risk of Allergic or Autoimmune Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis



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