

Soy-Free Diet

Why does my child need a soy-free diet?

Your child needs a soy-free diet because he or she has an allergy to soy and products made with soy.

Soy comes from a legume called the soybean. Soybeans are made into products like tofu and soy milk and are also used in many processed foods.

What is a soy allergy?

A soy allergy is an abnormal reaction to the **protein** found in soy. Most soy allergies are non-life threatening. Many infants grow out of their soy allergy while others may not.

What are the symptoms of a soy allergy?

In most cases, the signs and symptoms of a soy allergy are mild. A reaction to soy is similar to that of other food allergies.

Symptoms include:

- diarrhea
- blood and/or mucus in stools
- nausea and vomiting
- hives, itching or a rash
- swelling of the lips, throat or tongue
- feeling lightheaded or dizzy

There is no cure for food allergies. Avoiding soy and soy products is the only way to stop an allergic reaction.

What if my baby has a soy allergy?

If your baby is breastfed, any soy in the mother's diet can pass through her breast milk and cause symptoms in her baby. For that reason, the mother must eat a soy-free diet.

If your baby is fed with formula, use a soy-free formula so that your baby is not exposed to soy. A dietitian can help you find the right formula.

How do I know if a food contains soy or soy ingredients?

The only way to find out if a food contains soy is to read the ingredient list. Soy can be called other names on ingredient lists. Learn these names to help you find hidden sources of soy in food.

Other names for soy:

- Edamame
- Glycine max
- Kinako
- Kouridofu
- Kyodofu
- Miso
- Mono-diglyceride
- Natto
- Nimame
- Okara (soy pulp)
- Shovu
- Shoyu sauce
- Sobee
- Soya/soja
- Soybean oil*
- Soy lecithin*
- Soy protein (isolate/concentrate)
- Supro
- Tamari
- Tempeh
- Textured soy flour (TSF)
- Textured soy protein (TSP)
- Textured vegetable protein (TVP)
- Tofu
- Vegetable protein
- Yakidofu
- Yuba

* Soy lecithin and refined soybean oil are not made from the soy protein. Talk to your doctor to find out if these foods are safe for your child to eat.

Other ingredients that may contain soy

- Emulsifiers
- Hydrolyzed plant protein (HPP)
- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP)
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Lecithin
- Sprouts (source not listed)
- Stabilizers
- Vegetable broth, vegetable paste, vegetable protein
- Gum, shortening, starch

You need to read the list of ingredients. If the source of the ingredient is not listed, then avoid the food. If the source of the ingredient is listed and is not soy, such as sprouts – alfalfa, then it can be eaten.

Special notes

- Always read the ingredient list, even if you have looked at it before because ingredients in a product can change over time.
- Be safe! Avoid food products that do not have an ingredient list!

Non-food sources of soy

Soy can be found in non-food sources. Talk with your doctor to find out if your child needs to avoid these products.

- Cosmetics, soaps
 - Craft materials
 - Glycerin
 - Vitamins
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Can my child have a healthy diet without soy?

Yes, your child can have a healthy diet without soy. Speak to a dietitian to make sure your child is getting the right amount of nutrition.

If your child has an allergy to soy and cow's milk, this may lead to low levels of calcium and vitamin D intake. Calcium and vitamin D are important nutrients to help grow healthy bones.

Recommended intake of calcium and vitamin D

Nutrient	Age	Amount (Boys/Girls)
Calcium	0 to 6 months	210 mg
	7 to 12 months	270 mg
	1 to 3 years	500 mg
	4 to 8 years	800 mg
	9 to 18 years	1,300 mg
	19 to 50 years	1,000 mg
Vitamin D	0 to 12 months	200 to 1000 IU
	1 to 50 years	200 to 2000 IU
	Pregnancy/Lactation	200 to 2000 IU

If your child is allergic to soy and cow's milk, look for other products that have calcium and vitamin D added to them – this is called fortification.

For example:

- Almond Dream®
- Rice Dream®, PC Organics Rice Beverage, Natura Rice Beverage
- Hemp Dream™, Hemp Bliss
- Oat Dream®
- Calcium-fortified orange juice and cereals

Always read the label to make sure these products are soy-free.

If these calcium and vitamin D-fortified products are not part of your child's diet, ask your doctor about a calcium/vitamin D supplement.

Can my child eat out at restaurants?

Yes, your child can still eat at restaurants, but follow these guidelines and the soy-free diet to make sure that you avoid soy ingredients. Call restaurants in advance to see if they can cook soy-free meals.

Choose...	Avoid...	Ask for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain grilled or roasted meats • Baked potatoes • Salads with vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriental and vegetarian restaurants • Bacon bits, sprouts and salad dressings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredient lists of menu items • Pure olive oil and vinegar as a salad dressing

Tips for cooking and baking

Cooking for a child with a soy allergy can be challenging but there are safe substitutions for common soy ingredients. Here are a few suggestions.

Instead of...	Try this...
Soybean oil	Canola oil, corn oil, olive oil
Soy margarines	Butter (unless allergic to cow's milk), Earth Balance® Soy Free Natural Buttery Spread, Becel® RSF Margarine
Soy sauce	Balsamic vinegar with added salt, olive brine

Checklist to help you avoid soy



- Always check the ingredient list before you eat a product.
- Avoid foods that do not have a label.
- Always ask the person who prepared the food whether there are soy ingredients in it.
- Learn the other names for soy.
- Teach your child to not trade food with friends.
- Ask the chef at a restaurant for a list of ingredients in menu items and ask detailed questions about how the food is prepared.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet with information about your allergy.
- Talk to your doctor about how to be prepared for an allergic reaction.

Other resources

- Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network
<http://www.foodallergy.org/>
- Kids with Food Allergies
<http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/>
- Government of Canada
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/>

