



## **Surviving life with an allergy baby or toddler**

Some families find the switch to dealing with a restricted diet and allergy baby simple because they reduce the symptoms and immediately lead to a happier baby. However it can be an incredibly difficult and testing time for all, especially if your baby has multiple allergies and it takes time to investigate them all.

### **Eating**

Finding alternative foods for both you and your baby to eat can feel like a challenge. However, lots of supermarkets now have good ranges of plant milks, yogurts, cheeses and butter which is helpful. It is important to check labels when buying food as dairy in particular can turn up in the weirdest of places including wine and meat products such as sausages. The top 14 allergens must be in bold on a food label by law and this now includes bakery and fresh items. For many recipes you can simply swap the dairy out for the plant alternative. Eggs can be trickier but there are many suggestions on vegan websites on egg alternatives made with anything from apple sauce, flaxseed and even aquafaba ((chickpea water).

Eating out or ordering a takeaway can feel terrifying. However by law there must be information on allergens readily available for you to check what is suitable. Yes it can be trickier and you may need to phone ahead to check. Restaurants do not have to offer an alternative, many big chains will but some smaller individual restaurants and takeaways will not offer multiple alternatives. If in doubt call the restaurant before you go. I have only had one restaurant unable to offer an alternative.

### **Baby and Toddler groups**

This can be a total minefield, especially if you have a baby or toddler with severe allergies. Some groups offer snacks which may not be suitable, food can get spilt and little people will pick things up or sharing may occur. There is also the chance of contact reactions if your little one is very sensitive, especially as baby's put everything in their mouth. Sensory groups can be difficult as many use food for play. Again depending on your child, contact the group in advance. Lots of groups may be food free places due to mess – we attend a music group where food is banned for safety. Sensory groups may be able to adapt and change if they know you are attending. Carry wipes and watch your child closely if needed. You can even now get tops or bibs that state 'I have an allergy' on them. When you have a mobile baby or toddler, or you are looking after more than one baby this can be helpful as often others will pick up on the concern as well and be more mindful. It can be a tough balance between

keeping your baby safe and ensuring they are able to enjoy groups, and this can be very tough to start with.

## **Sleep**

Allergies and sleep do not tend to go hand in hand. Babies and toddlers can really struggle with being able to sleep and not wake up multiple times. And broken sleep is hard. Try and get those around you to help in allowing you to nap or sleep in, or sharing the load of life – particularly if you have other children. Being honest with what you need and taking time to recharge your batteries can be beneficial. Reach out for professional support in the form of a Holistic Sleep Coach and understanding what your child needs and how you can help them can benefit the whole family.

## **Mental Health**

Allergy babies are tough. Dealing with an unsettled unhappy baby can be incredibly stressful and draining. Whether it's your first or eighth baby, the challenges that go with allergies can put a lot of strain on parents. Surround yourself with people who are supportive and will help you how you need to be helped. For some that may be naps and people doing things around the house for you, for some this will be taking time to have a break from your baby to fill your cup. If you find everything is getting on top of you, reach out. Both to family and friends around you and to your health care practitioners such as a midwife, health visitor or GP. They may be able to refer you for additional support or offer medication to help. Many medications are suitable while breastfeeding and you should discuss with your GP what may be helpful

[Antidepressants and Breastfeeding - The Breastfeeding Network](#)

[Anxiety and Breastfeeding - The Breastfeeding Network](#)

## **Support**

Speak to local parents around you, you may find others dealing with allergies. Very often you will find someone knows a friend who has dealt with allergies and may be willing to talk. Baby groups can be a great place to meet others and breastfeeding support groups may also have other families dealing with allergy babies. There are various facebook groups that can also be helpful. However it is important to remember facebook groups the support is often provided on a peer to peer level and always check in with your Health Care Practitioner or IBCLC, Breastfeeding Counsellor if needed.

[Breastfeeding With CMPA and Other Food Allergies - Support Group UK | Facebook](#)

[Recipes & Food Finds \(UK\) - CMPA Support | Facebook](#)

[CMPA Support | Facebook](#)