

Ask Our Experts



SEASONAL HEALTH

Nutritionist, **Gabi Heyes**, answers your questions about family health. Here she talks about dairy and allergies



Q My mainly veggie, low sugar kids keep getting colds and my 13 month old has sleep apnoea. Does dairy play a significant role?

A Colds are quite common in young children and are a way of the body exercising the immune system. Sometimes though, it isn't always a cold virus and can instead be inflammation within the mucous membrane of the gut. This membrane runs throughout the whole body and the food we eat influences it. Dairy produces mucous in everybody, regardless of

whether it is actually tolerated. Other foods that naturally produce mucous are oranges, wheat, chocolate, soya, sugar, corn and bananas. Fermented dairy (home-made sour cream/ yoghurt/ cottage cheese) tends to be better as it contains healing lactic acid, active enzymes and good bacteria. A lack of good bacteria can produce excess mucous in the gut. This mucous coats the food particles and does not allow bile and digestive enzymes to break them down. Supporting good bacteria and consuming foods that are naturally fermented or 'live' can assist

with the enzymes, and therefore the digestion of food. Try to introduce a teaspoon of sauerkraut juice into your baby's food or offer freshly pressed juice such as carrot, cabbage, spinach and apple (¼ cup diluted with water). Babies seem to love fresh juices so experiment with flavours! Children's powdered probiotics can be sprinkled over food or put into water. Aim for a probiotic containing at least 4 billion live bacteria to re-establish the gut flora. This will strengthen the immune system and assist in the correct breakdown of food.

Mucous is a route out of the body for various toxins, so consider there may be an imbalance in another elimination organ - bowel, lungs, skin, kidneys, liver- which would produce symptoms such as constipation, diarrhoea, asthma, eczema, glue ear, allergies, emotional instability, sleep abnormalities and frequent "colds". Drinking filtered water may help, or using herbal teas such as echinacea, elderflower, nettle, calendula or chamomile. It is important to ensure the bowel movements are regular, which means evacuating at least once or twice a day. This can be achieved through adding linseeds to meals as they are small enough for a 13 month old. Other good sources of tasty fibre are pears, raspberries, passion fruit, avocados, black beans and lima beans.

Food intolerances may contribute to sleep apnoea and I have personally seen this condition clear up quite quickly once intolerances have been identified and removed from the diet. The common culprits can be pasteurised dairy, food additives (sulphites, nitrates), salicylates (citrus fruit, berries, tomato sauce), histamine (wheat, chickpeas, soy beans, peanuts, chocolate), MSG (cured meats, cheeses, sauces), gluten, and inhaled allergens (dust, mould, carpet or paint fumes). It is important that more serious causes of sleep apnoea are ruled out by your GP.

Any health concerns or dietary changes should be discussed with your GP

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