

## My Child with a milk allergy,

17.9.14

Looking back I didn't recognise Charlie's first acute reaction to milk... he was about 3-4 months old, I was eating some cornflakes and accidentally dropped some on his head. He developed a small patch of urticaria which I attributed to rubbing his head to dry him off (?addled baby brain). Charlie also suffered from eczema which started at about 6 weeks old, by 4 months we were wet wrapping. He was exclusively breast fed until he was 4 months then weaned using breast milk to add to cereals and purees.

At 7 months I gave him some Weetabix with cow's milk for breakfast. His whole face became bright red and swollen, especially around his mouth. He looked like a toad. I took him to A+E and his symptoms settled with piriton. I subsequently avoided all cow's milk (I didn't have any milk whilst breast feeding and didn't give any drinks/foods containing milk to Charlie). Charlie's eczema completely resolved within a couple of weeks.

We were seen in the paediatric allergy service, it was made clear to us that Charlie's allergy was mild, it was suggested I avoid milk whilst breast feeding and use soya base feed, I wasn't particularly keen on this and requested an alternative and was prescribed Nutramigen. It stinks and gradually Charlie developed the same aroma as his milk!

Over the years Charlie had some skin pricks and milk challenges, he eventually passed a milk challenge at around 7y of age, however on reintroducing milk to his diet he started to react to milk again. By this time he could describe his symptoms, a very unpleasant tingly itch in his mouth and hot feeling in his throat. He would also get urticaria when milk touched his skin and sometimes diarrhoea after accidental ingestion. I don't think he will grow out of it now as, at 12y, his symptoms persist.

We stick to a completely milk free diet, he can't tolerate even small amounts or cooked milk however he does eat foods labelled "may contain traces of milk". Sometimes he gets symptoms after eating these foods but this is rare. He continued to drink **Nutramigen** whilst a toddler then we switched to fortified milk alternatives, initially we used **Rice milk** which we were subsequently advised to avoid due to the Arsenic content... now we use **Oat based milk**.

Even though his allergy is only mild it has impacted his life, particularly on occasions such as children's parties, school trips and visits to his friends. It is a difference between him and other children who can't quite believe he doesn't eat chocolate! On occasions it has been implied by others that Charlie's allergy is fabricated or a sign of fussiness. I have also been told that it might be my fault for a variety of reasons ranging from errors in weaning to being too clean around the house! (These people obviously haven't seen my house...) Charlie accepts his allergy and just gets on with things. We are encouraging him in the kitchen so he can become a good cook and make food he likes milk free.