



## **What is a food allergy?**

You may be able to reduce your baby's risk of developing allergies by waiting until at least 4 months before introducing food. Breastfeeding during that time is especially protective. When its time for solid foods, including potential allergens is OK for most babies, as long as the foods are developmentally appropriate. Be sure to ask your doctor about food allergens and introducing foods.

In unusual cases, babies may become sensitized to very small amounts of food proteins that are carried in breastmilk. If you suspect your baby is having an allergic reaction to your breastmilk, have a talk with your baby's doctor to discuss symptoms and removing the likely triggers from your diet.

## **So, is it an allergy or an intolerance?**

We know the difference is confusing. Food allergy reactions have more to do with the immune system and may happen quickly—within minutes or hours after eating—and can include symptoms such as hives, pale skin, vomiting, diarrhea and breathing problems. Reactions can happen even when only a very small amount of food is eaten, touched or even inhaled. The most common foods causing allergies in the US are peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.

Food intolerances are reactions to foods inside the digestive system (and don't involve the immune system). Lactose (a sugar found in milk) intolerance is an

example of a food intolerance in adults. Usually, small amounts of the problem food can be eaten before symptoms appear. Some symptoms might be gas, stomachaches, bloating and diarrhea.

The only way to know what your baby is experiencing is to talk with their doctor and discuss your concerns.