

# The Milk Ladder



A step-by-step guide for reintroducing milk safely  
For children with non-IgE mediated cow's milk allergy.

## Before You Begin

The Milk Ladder is a gradual way to reintroduce milk back into your child's diet. It moves from foods with the **least amount of milk protein** to those with the **most**.

Only start the ladder if recommended by a paediatric dietitian or paediatrician. Always move slowly and only progress when each step is well tolerated.

### Rule 1

#### Once you start the ladder, don't stop the ladder

Your child can't outgrow the allergy without ongoing exposure.

If a reaction happens:

- Pause
- Go back to the last tolerated step
- Continue when symptoms settle

Stopping completely resets progress.

### Rule 2

#### The ladder is compounding, not one step at a time

Each step builds on the previous one.

Once a step is tolerated, that food should be:

- Included a **minimum of twice per week**
- Continued while moving to the next step

This slow build helps the body adjust without overwhelm.

## What Counts as a Reaction

### Common reactions:

- Blood or mucous in stool
- Loose stools or constipation
- Vomiting
- Congestion
- Eczema flare
- Tummy pain or unusual discomfort

Reactions can occur up to **72 hours** after eating the food.

## What to Do if Your Child Fails a Step

If your child reacts:

1. **Pause the ladder**
2. **Go back to the last tolerated step**
3. **Stay at that lower level for 2 months**
4. **Offer tolerated foods at least twice per week**

### Example:

If your child reacted at ½ portion of Step 2 (muffin):

- Go back to ¼ muffin
- Plus include a full Step 1 biscuit twice weekly
- Stay here for 2 months before retrying

# The Steps of the Milk Ladder



Each step should be completed slowly, using the same food for a minimum of 3 days per portion size.

When you reach the full portion on fresh dairy steps, include that food daily for 2 weeks before continuing to the next.

Step	Food	1/4 Portion (3 days)	1/2 Portion (3 days)	Full Portion (3 days)
STEP 1	Biscuit	✓	✓	✓
		Include this week: Just biscuit Top Tip: Use a plain, baked biscuit (not soft).		
STEP 2	Muffin	✓	✓	✓
		Include this week: Biscuit twice this week Top Tip: Keep muffins small and consistent in recipe.		
STEP 3	Pancake	✓	✓	✓
		Include this week: Biscuit or muffin twice this week Top Tip: Muffins tend to be tolerated well.		
STEP 4	Cheese	5g (3 days)	10g (3 days)	20g (3 days)
		Include this week: Biscuit/muffin OR pancake twice this week Top Tip: Offer thin slices or grated cheese.		
STEP 5	Yoghurt	30g (3 days)	60g (3 days)	125g (3 days)
		Include this week: Muffin/pancake or cheese twice this week Top Tip: Cheese can now be an everyday food.		
STEP 6	Milk	100ml (3 days)	150ml (3 days)	200ml (3 days)
		Include this week: Any earlier foods twice this week Top Tip: Yoghurt can now be everyday.		