



Label Reading Tips for a Dairy-Free Eating Plan

Reading the ingredient list underneath or near the food and nutrition labels is an important habit to learn when looking for foods that are safe on a dairy-free eating plan. Manufacturers are required to state all ingredients that could contain milk on the ingredient list because milk is one of the nine main allergens. Look for the words “contains milk” when reviewing these labels.

Understanding Food Label Advisory Statements

Some food manufacturers voluntarily print advisory statements on food labels if there is a risk that a safe food cross-contacted with a food allergen, such as milk.

- Avoid any product that has an advisory statement for milk.
- Look for advisory labeling such as “may contain milk” or “produced in a facility that also produces products containing milk.”
- Advisory labeling is not required by law and the absence of an advisory statement does not necessarily mean there is no risk of cross-contact with milk.
- You may need to call the manufacturer for information about how the product was made.

Label Reading Tips

The following foods contain milk or cow’s milk proteins and should be avoided:

- All types of milk, including whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, fat-free, buttermilk, powdered, condensed and evaporated
- Butter, butter fat, butter solids and ghee
- Cheese (in all forms) and cheese flavoring
- Cream, including heavy, light, sour, whipping and whipped
- Custard and pudding
- Half-and-half
- Ice cream and sherbet
- Yogurt

If you see any of the following ingredients on the label, the food may contain milk or cow’s milk proteins:

- Casein and caseinates (in all forms)
- Curds
- Hydrolysates (casein, milk protein, protein, whey and whey protein)
- Lactalbumin, lactalbumin phosphate, lactoglobulin and lactoferrin
- Milk derivative, milk powder, milk protein, milk solids, nonfat milk solids and nonfat dry milk
- Rennet casein
- Whey (in all forms, such as cured whey, lactose-free whey, demineralized whey, sweet dairy whey, whey protein concentrate, whey powder and whey solids)

To avoid cow’s milk and milk products, check ingredients lists for all packaged foods. For example, you may find some of the ingredients listed above in the following items:

- Breads
- Crackers
- Brownies, cakes and cookies
- Muffins and pancakes
- Cereals
- Chewing gum
- Cold cuts and deli meats that contain cheese
- Hot dogs that contain cheese
- Processed and canned meats and fish
- Lactose-free products
- Pre-mixed mashed potatoes
- Salad dressings
- Soups
- Candy and caramels
- Creamy beverage mixes