

Hypoallergenic Dairy Alternatives for Underweight Rett Girls

I would like to make an addition to my handbook on nutrition for Rett Girls. If your daughter is underweight and has a dairy and soy allergy or if dairy is causing constipation, I feel it is best to approach their digestive system as if they are a highly sensitive infant irregardless of their actual age.

Infant formulas are designed to mimic breast milk to the best of our abilities. 40-50% of the total calories in breast milk and infant formula come from fat. Fats are the richest source of energy used by the body. They are relatively light weight and ideal for storing calories for future requirements.

Function of Fats:

Provides protection by surrounding organs

Maintains body temperature

Transports nutrients

Regulates stomach emptying

Hormone synthesis and eicosanoid metabolism

Cell membrane structure

There are hypoallergenic or therapeutic infant formulas available that may be the best alternative for Rett girls if they have chewing/swallowing difficulties that make their diet very limited.

These infant formulas are prepared to meet the particular needs of very sensitive infants who cannot tolerate either cow's milk or soy protein. The formulas are:

Alimentum

Enfalac Nutramigen

Enfalac Presgestimil

In order to reduce the infant's exposure to whole protein, cow's milk protein in such formulas is predigested, filtered, and purified in a lab until it becomes a casein hydrolysate. This type of protein is easier to digest and absorb, and it is considered less allergenic.

These formulas contain no lactose but they include every vitamin and mineral needed for proper growth during the first year of life; some are fortified with iron. If your child suffers from constipation use the formula without added Iron.

The above may be a better alternative for some children with dairy sensitivities as most of the meal replacement products i.e. Boost and Ensure contain milk protein.

If you are lactose intolerant, you lack the ability to digest lactose, the sugar found in milk. All Ensure products, except for Ensure Pudding and Ensure Nutrition Bars, are lactose-free. However, if you are truly allergic to milk protein, Ensure does contain milk protein.

Although there's no harm in a child drinking Ensure, it's really formulated for the nutritional needs of an adult. Because children's growing bodies have special nutrient needs, there is PediaSure. This specially formulated product gives children ages 1-10 the same quality of nutritional support that adults get from Ensure.

If you are using a hypoallergenic infant formula as a drink for your daughter but they do not like the taste just add fruit, i.e. bananas, avocados, berries.

Beware of Toxic Doses: as I have already suggested that you supplement you daughter's diet with a liquid vitamin make sure they are not taking megadoses with the formula (which contains added vitamins) added to the diet.

Many vitamins and minerals taken in large quantities can cause harm.

Vitamin D is recommended for growth but in excessive doses can retard growth.

Vitamin A in the form of retinol can cause serious problems when taken excessively.

Iron if taken in excess can cause problems with the liver and cause constipation.

Always check your labels and ask your physician.