



# Substitutions for Common Allergens

Having a food allergy doesn't always mean you have to give up your favorite meals. There are many options for replacing an allergen with a safe ingredient. Below are some substitutions for common allergens. When preparing meals for someone with multiple food allergies, be mindful not to replace one allergen with another. *Always read labels and contact the manufacturer with questions.*

**Milk:** When baking, look for a substitute with high fat and protein to achieve similar results as cow's milk. Try to choose "enriched" or "fortified" versions, as this indicates that calcium and vitamin D have been added.

Milk substitutes are not created equal. Research indicates soy milk is the most nutritious option since it provides almost as much protein, vitamin D and calcium as regular milk. Rice, cashew and almond milk are low in protein and fat but provide comparable amounts of calcium and vitamin D. Rice, almond, coconut, cashew, hemp, pea, and soy milk substitutes often work well for cooking and baking.

Note that there is a difference between coconut milk beverages and canned coconut milk. Refrigerated coconut beverages work well in smoothies, over cereal and in coffee. Canned coconut milk works well in soups and sauces and can be made into whipped cream for desserts.

Avoid using infant formula for cooking and baking because heating it to a high temperature can destroy the nutritional quality and may have an adverse effect on flavor. If your allergy allows you to, try to use several different kinds of milk for best nutritional results

**Butter:** Milk-free margarine and soy butter are common substitutes. For best results when baking with margarine, look for one with low-water content. Margarine sticks usually have less water than tub margarine.

**Yogurt:** Soy, coconut, almond, cashew, and pea-based yogurts are good alternatives to milk-based versions. Look for yogurt that has calcium added. Soy yogurt provides a good source of protein and overall is most similar to milk-based yogurt.

**Cheese:** Vegan or veggie cheese can be made of several different ingredients, some of which include common allergens, including milk and tree nuts, so always read labels and contact the manufacturer with questions.

**Eggs:** For baking, you can use one of the following methods (per egg called for in recipe):

- One-quarter cup of unsweetened applesauce with one-half teaspoon of baking powder
- One-quarter cup of mashed banana (there may be a slight banana flavor)
- One tablespoon of ground flax seeds with three tablespoons of water; mix until water is fully absorbed
- Two tablespoons of water with one tablespoon of oil (vegetable or corn oil works best) and two teaspoons of baking powder

There are also powdered egg replacers that are free of the top eight allergens at most grocery stores.

**Wheat:** There are many wheat-free grains available, such as rice, corn, millet, potato, tapioca, and quinoa. Many of these grains are also made into wheat-free flours. You can find a number of gluten-free flours that can be used cup for cup for wheat flour.

One recipe for making your own wheat-free flour is to mix four cups superfine brown rice flour, one and one-third cups potato starch (not flour) and two-thirds of a cup of tapioca flour (sometimes called tapioca starch).

**Peanut butter:** Sunflower seed butter, soy butter, pea butter, and tahini (made from sesame) are common substitutes. Tree nut butters, such as almond or cashew butter, can be used by individuals who do not have a tree nut allergy. *Note that tree nut butters can be produced on equipment shared with other tree nuts and, in some cases, peanuts. Contact the manufacturer before eating these products.*

