

FOOD INTOLERANCE NETWORK FACTSHEET

A2 Milk

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What is A2 milk?

A2 is the name of a milk protein that was in all dairy herds until a natural mutation occurred in the European herd thousands of years ago.

Milk from Jersey cows, Guernsey cows, camels, sheep, buffalo, yaks, donkeys, goats, and Asian cows naturally contain mostly these A2 beta casein proteins, whereas milk from cows such as Holsteins usually contains mostly the protein variant called A1 beta casein. In the 1970s, Australian dairy herds switched from using Jersey cows to Holsteins and at that time some dairy farmers' families noticed effects on their health, keeping a Jersey cow for their own use.

A2 is also the brand name of milk containing predominantly A2 beta casein protein (see www.a2australia.com.au).

What are the health benefits of A2 milk?

Milks containing mostly A2 proteins are often said to be better for 'allergies' (such as gut, skin rashes, hayfever, cough). There is also research to suggest that A1 beta casein may be associated with serious health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes type 1 and autism.

From the Food Intolerance Network point of view, we are interested in the reports from our members who have noticed improvements by switching to A2 milk – and I am one of them (for allergic rhinitis).

For long term heart health, a number of men who have read the book *Devil in the Milk* – including my husband – won't touch A1 milk again.

Families seem to find the switch to A2 milk the easiest of all dietary changes to make. It seems to work best for people with physical symptoms – such as gut, rashes, ear infections – than behaviour, although some children with behavioural conditions do improve on A2 milk. However, they may do even better on soymilk or ricemilk and some children who are affected by A1 milk are affected as badly by A2 so you need to do a challenge.

Reader reports

[929] Irritable bowel symptoms transformed by A2 milk (July 2010)

For the past 18+ months my wife has suffered from an increasing problem with gut issues and chronic diarrhea and related symptoms. She has tried various milks and milk substitutes (soy, etc). None have made any difference to her gut problems. Her GP has not found any specific cause and has recommended a range of tests and indicated it was probably "irritable bowel syndrome" which I'm sure you know is one of the catch-all medical labels which basically means "we don't really know".

On pure chance my wife (who had seen your report a couple of years ago on A2) decided about 6 weeks ago she had nothing to lose by trying A2 milk .

Our life has been transformed and this happened literally overnight! Gut patterns are back to normal, a far far cry from many daily urgent dashes to the loo, usually immediately after eating or drinking almost anything but particularly things containing dairy products. Literally life became normal within 4 hours of her first bowl of oatmeal with A2 milk. Absolutely amazing.

The transformation has been astounding and we are very grateful to the people that have figured out the A2 story - Russell by email.

[928] Dairy free but now happy on a2 yoghurt (July 2010)

We were very excited to try A2 yogurt - our 6yo daughter developed stomach pains last year which we finally attributed to dairy, and were very pleased that she responded really well to A2. Our baby son was also super-sensitive to cow's milk, while breastfeeding I had to be on a strict dairy-free diet or he'd be in terrible pain. He's now 18 months and the Jalna A2 yoghurt is his favourite food - no tummy pain at all! We've had to be careful not to overdo it - forgot that it was moderate amines - and he can only have the natural because of the salicylate content in the flavoured ones, but he has it either plain or with maple syrup, and thinks it's the best food ever. - Megan, by email

[927] Brief reports on A2 milk and rhinitis, autism and weight gain (March 2009)

My allergic rhinitis (stuffy and runny nose, chronic cough, congestion, hayfever during pollen season) appears to be entirely related to A1 but not A2 milk. For the last two years I have enjoyed unlimited A2 milk after 12 years on soymilk.

A failsafe-friendly dietitian reports the use of A2 milk during an elimination diet for a boy with autistic type behaviour: 'I placed him on a milk-free elimination diet, but allowed A2 milk. He consumed several cups of this per day whilst on the diet. His behaviour, concentration and sense of humour all improved. However, when we challenged with normal milk, concentration etc deteriorated. So it is back to the A2 milk whilst we go through other challenges.'

The dietitian asked my skinny 7 year old son – who tested negative for coeliac disease - to go gluten free and he felt better but lost a lot of weight. Then three months ago we switched to A2 milk and now he is doing really well. He has even been able to go back on gluten.

[622] Amazing change in my child due to A2 milk (February 2008)

My 10 yr-old disabled daughter was on neocate advance which she didn't tolerate and I was told she was past the hospital's expertise so they didn't know what to do with her. She was getting sick, looked shocking and her behaviour was very hard to manage (especially as mentally she is about two-year-old) so I gave her ricemilk instead of neocate advance. After four days I realized she wasn't tolerating ricemilk. So in desperation I tried A2 milk after seeing what it did for a friend's son - his behaviour improved dramatically, he stopped screaming, his ear infections stopped and he started to talk.

My daughter has been on A2 milk for a week now (due to underweight issues she is tube fed over a litre a day) and she looks heaps healthier. Since commencing A2 milk the diarrhoea has stopped and nappies are becoming more solid, no vomiting, rashes are gone, wheezing gone and she is wanting her tube feeds - and more - plus solids, usually we have big problems getting her to eat orally. In a week she has gone from 18.2 to 19.4kg (400g being in the last 2 days) that's the best weight gain she has ever had. Her behaviour is wonderful. She is so calm and she has started to talk (she was non verbal before). She even sat with her baby sister for an hour and actually played with the baby's toy with her. That's amazing as usually she hasn't got a very good concentration span - one minute if you're lucky is all I've managed out of her - and she doesn't play, never has done - so her changes are amazing and very strange as she doesn't tolerate cows milk.

[358] Cranky and irritable (December 2004)

We've switched to the A2 milk as both the boys had to have soy formula milk when they were little. I noticed the difference in Ryan when we didn't bother to get it one week - Ryan was cranky and irritable and both boys woke up with phlegm on the chest.

See testimonials on the A2 website www.a2australia.com.au

Are there any medical reports?

In Australia and NZ, A2 milk is too new to have been used in studies, but there is a medical report of allergies managed by camel milk, which also contains a2 beta casein protein.

In this study, eight children with severe food (mainly milk) allergies recovered fully from their allergies by drinking camel milk. Medical researchers at the Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva Israel reported that the children aged 4 months to 10 years suffered from symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting after eating, skin rashes, asthma, lactase deficiency and 'chemical imbalance' that did not respond to conventional treatments. The 4 months old child had been taken home from hospital because of lack of improvement and constant diarrhoea. A girl from the US was anaphylactic to cows milk and extremely allergic to all but a few foods. Families were supplied with bottles of frozen unpasteurised camel milk to be thawed as needed and instructed not to heat the milk which would destroy the immunoglobulins and protective proteins. The milk replaced all other foods for 2 weeks, after which other food was gradually added to the diet as chosen by parents. All children showed improvement with 24 hours of starting to drink the milk and all symptoms disappeared with in 4 days. No recurrence of the allergic symptoms was reported within 30 days. The 4 month old later suffered a severe ear infection which improved on reintroduction of camel milk. The child from the US returned home after two weeks and was able to eat foods to which she had previously been allergic. The researchers suggested that the rapid improvement in the children's health and later ability to digest other foods may be due to both the lack of the allergenic beta-lactoglobulin and particular beta-casein protein found in cows milk combined with protective proteins found in camel milk.

Reference: Shabo Y et al, Camel milk for food allergies in children, *Isr Med Assoc J.* 2005;7(12):796-8, <http://www.ima.org.il/imag/ar05dec-12.pdf>

See more from medical journals under [More Information](#) below.

Why doesn't my doctor know about this?

In New Zealand, where the laboratory test for A2 beta casein protein was discovered, doctors do know about this. An editorial in the journal of the NZ Medical Association commented that it would be reasonably straightforward to change New Zealand dairy herds to produce only A2 milk if that was necessary. 'The intervention would require no change in behaviour by New Zealanders and could be implemented with little personal difficulty for substantial health gain', the author concluded.

However, as with any topic where money is involved, there is a lot of controversy created by people with vested interests. Dairy industries in New Zealand and Australia do not want to change to A2 milk because they don't want to admit that the product they sell now - ordinary milk - may be associated with health problems.

Is A2 milk diluted with permeate?

No, unlike many regular milks, A2 is not diluted with permeate which is a by-product of milk processing. See <http://www.a2australia.com.au/video-current-affair.php>. That's probably partly why it costs more – but we figure it is worth the extra.

Where can I buy A2 milk - in Australia, UK, USA?

- In Australia, see www.a2australia.com.au for stockists
- In the USA, see Hy-Vee grocery stores in the Midwest, www.hy-vee.com
- In the UK, for milk containing A2 beta casein protein, see buffalo milk www.buffalomilk.co.uk

Where can I buy A2 yoghurt?

A2 yoghurt is now available in stores as Jalna a2 yoghurt, mostly in Coles Supermarkets. According to RPAH guidelines, the natural flavour is the most suitable for failsafers - although yoghurts are now not recommended on the strict elimination diet (due to moderate amines), but can be incorporated into your diet after challenges if you can tolerate them, see [928] Reader Report above. The vanilla and fruit flavoured options are not failsafe due to salicylates (as the vanilla flavour contains fruit juice).

You can make your own yoghurt using A2 milk (you will need to use more starter than usual and take a longer setting time than usual).

Or you can buy sheep milk yoghurt, see www.meredithdairy.com for stockists. Pure sheep milk yoghurt - Meredith Dairy Yoghurt is made from ewe's milk. Sheep milk yoghurt offers a healthy alternative to people with an aversion to cows milk.

GREEN LABEL & LID – is made using Lacto Bacillus Acidophilus & Bifidus (Probiotic).

BLUE LABEL & LID – is made using Greek Lacto Bacillus Thermopilus & Bulgaris

More information

For a scientific, balanced and readable account of the politics preventing A2 milk from becoming mainstream, I strongly recommend the book ***Devil in the Milk*** by Professor Keith Woodford. You can see an interview with Professor Woodford at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxK3XBwDd9k>.

And see the New Zealand A2 website www.a2corporation.com

www.fedup.com.au

The information given is not intended as medical advice. Always consult with your doctor for underlying illness. Before beginning dietary investigation, consult a dietician with an interest in food intolerance. You can find a supportive dietitian through the Dietitians Association of Australia www.daa.asn.au or write for our list of supportive dietitians (confoodnet@ozemail.com.au)

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