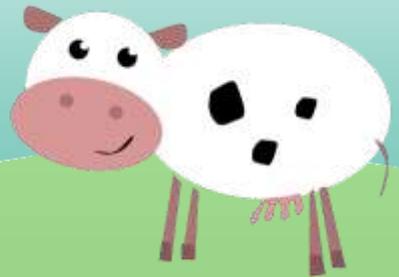
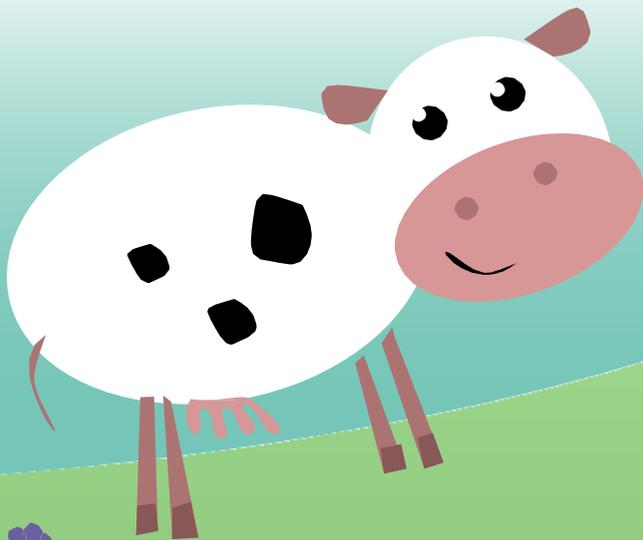


# Why should I wait to give my baby cow's milk?



Whether you're breastfeeding or bottle feeding your baby, you may be wondering when you can begin giving her cow's milk.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting until a child is a year old before starting her on fresh cow's milk.



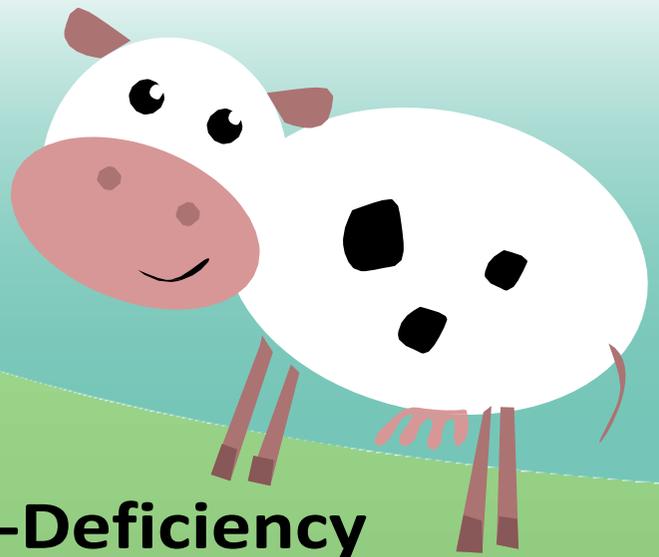
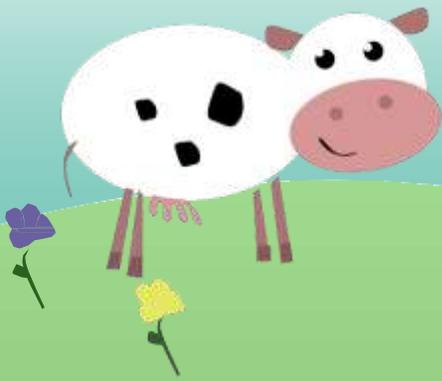
There are several important reasons to do this.

## Reducing the Risk of Allergy

Waiting to give fresh milk to your child may prevent or lessen the risk of developing an allergy. About 2 to 3 percent of infants will develop some or all of the following allergic symptoms when they drink cow's milk:

- A red bumpy rash
- A runny or stuffy nose
- Coughing or wheezing
- Constipation or diarrhea

Waiting until your child is 1 year of age before giving her fresh cow's milk will help give her time needed to build up her immune system, which may decrease the likelihood of a serious allergic reaction once she does drink fresh cow's milk.



## Reducing the Risk of Iron-Deficiency

By giving your child fresh cow's milk before 1 year of age, you may increase her chances of developing iron-deficiency anemia (a low number of red blood cells).

Iron deficiency in infants can harm brain and nerve development. This can happen for several reasons:

- Fresh cow's milk has less iron than breast milk or iron fortified formulas.
- The composition of fresh cow's milk -- calcium, phosphate and vitamin C -- can cause a decrease in the absorption of iron in a baby's intestine.
- Fresh cow's milk can cause slight intestinal bleeding. This bleeding cannot be seen with the naked eye, but can be enough to make your child anemic. Some studies have shown that around one-third of children who are regularly given fresh cow's milk before 12 months of age will be anemic before they are 12- to 15-months old.

