



MILK WOES: Oliver Rogers with mum Katie Justin and Katie's mum Millie Justin. He may grow out of his allergy to cows' milk.

ALLERGY WORRY FOR TINY OLIVER

Up to six per cent of babies have an allergy to cow milk. Catherine Scott spoke to one family about how they dealt with the condition

When Oliver Rogers was born he cried for the first six weeks of his life leaving his parents feeling exhausted and helpless.

"It started when he was born. His symptoms started to appear and he would cry and cry and the only thing that helped was to walk around carrying him," said mum Katie Justin. "It was high-pitched screaming 24/7 and he never stopped moving and writhing and had sickness but at first I thought it was normal for a new born. After six weeks it didn't get any better, we became exhausted and started to worry something was fundamentally wrong." They took Oliver to see their GP who thought the issue might be reflux and were advised to try various remedies. At one point Katie resorted to taking him to A&E as she was worried about meningitis.

"We could not find out what was wrong and we were becoming increasingly desperate. Then we started to look at nurseries early due to long waiting lists and the manager of one nursery we visited recognised the symptoms and thought Oliver

might have a milk allergy so I started to investigate and tried different types of milk, although nothing seemed to provide a solution," said Katie. When they moved house their new neighbours, who were doctors, said their own son had suffered from an allergy, which had taken ages to diagnose. They recommended

THE SYMPTOMS

■ Stomach problems – including vomiting, reflux, colic, diarrhoea, flatulence, stomach pain and mucousy or bloody stools.

■ Breathing problems – including wheezing, sore throat, persistent runny nose or eyes, ear ache, persistent cough and itchy mouth or excessive dribble

■ Skin problems – including eczema, rashes, hives, wheals, contact dermatitis, swelling of the eyes and lips.

■ www.allergyuk.org

Dr Donald Hodge, consultant in paediatric allergy and general paediatrics at Spire Leeds Hospital.

After examining Oliver and taking a medical history Dr Hodge diagnosed cow's milk protein allergy and reflux. According to Allergy UK, CMPA is quite common affecting around three to six per cent of infants and young children and most outgrow it by five, but it can be difficult to diagnose.

"Oliver's symptoms were typical of cow's milk protein intolerance which was also causing gastro-oesophageal reflux. He was commenced on an appropriate hypoallergenic milk formula and additional treatment for reflux," says Dr Hodge.

"It was such a relief to finally know what was causing the problem and what action we needed to take. We cut out cows' milk. Oliver was treated and stabilised. Dr Hodge provided emotional support when we felt there was nowhere else to turn."

By March this year Oliver was much better and in June he started nursery. Today Oliver is a bright happy baby and feeding well.