



Lactose or Dairy Intolerance

A Guide for People Who Have Trouble Digesting Milk or Milk Products



Lactose

in Dairy

Foods:



High Lactose
Milk



Medium Lactose
Ice Cream



Medium-Low Lactose
Yogurt



Low Lactose
Cottage Cheese



Very Low Lactose
Hard Cheese

Milk helps build strong bones and teeth. But what can you do if you are having trouble digesting milk?

What is lactose intolerance?

Lactose is the natural sugar in milk. Some people can not digest lactose well.

When lactose does not get digested you may have:

- Gas
- Bloating
- Cramps
- Diarrhea

This happens 30 minutes to two hours after eating or drinking foods that have lactose.

If you have these problems, your doctor can do a simple test to see if you are lactose intolerant.

Is lactose intolerance the same as milk allergy?

Lactose intolerance is not the same as milk allergy. People with milk allergy are allergic to the protein in milk. Milk allergy is very rare. Only 1–3% of babies have it. Most children with a milk allergy outgrow it before the age of 3. The possible symptoms include: skin rash, diarrhea and/or constipation, bronchitis, and blood in the stool. Diagnosis must be made by a doctor.

What can I do if I am lactose intolerant?

- Eat or drink small amounts of dairy products more often.
- Eat or drink dairy products along with other foods at a meal or snack.
- Use foods that contain less lactose, such as lactose-reduced milk, hard cheeses, cottage cheese, yogurt with **“Active Cultures”**, and ice cream.
- Buy foods labeled “low lactose” or “lactose free.”
- Look for **“Acidophilus milk”** or **“Lactose-reduced milk”** in the dairy section in the supermarket. They taste good and are easier to digest if you have lactose intolerance. Ask your WIC counselor about these types of milk if you would like to buy them with a WIC check.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor for special drops or tablets (lactase enzymes) that help you digest milk. You can add drops to regular whole milk, 2% milk, 1% milk or nonfat milk to make your own lactose-reduced milk.



Why do I still need dairy products?

Dairy products are a major source of calcium, though calcium can be found in other foods. Your body needs calcium for healthy bones and teeth.

In later life, a lack of calcium may lead to thin and weak bones. This condition is known as **osteoporosis**.

Everyone needs to get plenty of food high in calcium to build strong bones.

Non-dairy sources of calcium

Here are some non-dairy foods that contain calcium. These foods do not contain as much calcium as dairy products.

Good

Sources of Calcium:

soybeans	refried beans
tofu*	baked beans
collard greens	calcium-fortified juice
salmon and sardines with bones	soy beverages

Fair

Sources of Calcium:

clams	almonds
oysters	oranges
mung beans	corn tortillas**
mustard greens	
turnip greens	

* if calcium is listed with the ingredients

** if lime is listed with the ingredients



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