

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

What does it mean to be diagnosed with lactose intolerance?

Lactose intolerance is the inability to digest lactose, the sugar found in milk. People who are lactose intolerant may experience gas, stomach cramps, bloating, and diarrhea after consuming a lactose-containing food. This is because their intestine does not contain lactase, the enzyme needed to break down lactose.

What foods contain lactose?

Lactose is mainly found in dairy products, but may be present as an ingredient or component of various other food products. The extent that one needs to avoid lactose depends on the degree of lactose intolerance experienced and how many symptoms the patient can or will tolerate.

In general the following foods are sources of lactose:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Ice Cream, Sherbet, Ice Milk, Custard, Pudding
- Cheese
- Milk Solids
- Sweet or Sour Cream
- Buttermilk

In addition, possible food sources of lactose are:

- Breads
- Waffles, Crepes, and Pancakes (may have small amounts of milk)
- Candy (chocolate, caramels)
- Cookies
- Cold Cuts
- Hot Dogs
- Processed Meats
- Commercial Sauces and Gravies (especially cream sauce)
- Dessert Mixes
- Cream Soups
- Some Ready-to-Eat Cereals
- Frostings
- Chocolate Drink Mixes
- Salad Dressings
- Sugar Substitutes (i.e. Equal)

Individuals with severe lactose intolerance need to be aware of medications that include lactose.

One way to show that a product is milk-free is to look for the word “parve” on the label. That means the product does not contain any dairy ingredients.

Can I eat any foods with lactose?

Some people with lactose intolerance can tolerate small amounts of lactose. For example, ½ cup of fat free milk or 1 cup of yogurt is tolerated in individuals without severe lactose intolerance. Eating solid food, especially with fiber, at the same time with lactose-containing foods, may alleviate symptoms of lactose intolerance.

If I have severe lactose intolerance, is there anyway I can enjoy milk or foods that contain lactose?

You have two options:

Buy LACTAID MILK that is already digested. You can purchase this in the milk section of the supermarket.

Use LACTAID CAPSULES OR TABLETS: LACTAID tablets may be purchased without prescription. You can take these before a meal to assist in the breakdown of the lactose containing food.

How do you get enough Calcium when on a Lactose-restricted or Lactose-reduced diet?

Calcium is found mostly in dairy products and is an essential mineral for good health and strong bones. Most people need 1000 mg per day, except for pregnant and nursing females (1200 mg), and postmenopausal females (1500 mg per day).

Some of the non-dairy foods that contain calcium include fortified orange juice, broccoli, Chinese cabbage, greens, and salmon with bones. However, it is difficult to get the recommended amounts without a supplement. Talk to your dietitian or healthcare provider about the decision to take calcium supplements.