

Lacking Lactose?



Lactose Intolerance is an unpleasant condition where our bodies do not make enough of an enzyme called lactase which breaks down the naturally-occurring milk sugar called lactose. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include diarrhea, gas, bloating, constipation, and/or abdominal pain within 30 minutes to 2 hours after consuming foods with lactose. Most people who have lactose intolerance know it! Some people are born with insufficient lactase. Additionally, it's estimated that almost 100% of Asians, 80% of African Americans, 50% of Mexican-Americans, and 15% of the White population have or will develop a decreased ability to make lactase.

What to do? Too often, those affected stop consuming dairy products altogether due to concern about symptoms. However, help is possible to allow individuals with lactose intolerance to continue consuming dairy products.

Why is it important to try to continue to consume dairy? Why not just stop drinking milk and eating dairy products? Because: milk products are not only the largest source of Calcium, but many are also good sources of vitamin D, protein, magnesium and phosphorus. All of these vitamins and minerals are needed to work together and let Calcium make a healthier body:

- Calcium helps to:
 - Develop and maintain strong bones and teeth.
 - Release hormones and enzymes that affect almost every function in the body.
 - Protect against colon cancer. One study found that individuals who consumed 700-800 milligrams (mg) Calcium/day had a 40-50% decreased risk of colon cancer.
 - Reduce blood cholesterol and thus the risk of heart disease.
 - Reduce blood pressure as part of a diet low in saturated fat (low or nonfat dairy, high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and reduced in sodium). Studies have found that lowered blood pressure may protect against developing dementia.
- Calcium also aids muscle movement and nerve function by carrying messages between the brain and every body part, affects the ability to form blood clots, and may help with weight loss and maintenance of healthy weight.



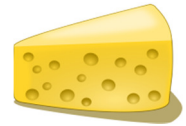
If you are bothered by any lactose-related symptoms, try the following:

- Do consume some dairy 2-3 times each week on an ongoing basis.
- Consume small amounts of dairy at any one time. People often find they can tolerate 4-6 ounces of dairy without any discomfort. Some find that they tolerate dairy better in the morning hours. Eat or drink your dairy along with other types of food.



- Yogurt is often well tolerated. The natural, healthy bacteria in yogurt help to break down some of the milk sugar.

- Hard cheeses such as Cheddar and Swiss contain much less lactose than milk and may be better tolerated.
- Some individuals find that a product called Lactaid (or store brand substitute) either in pill form or as a prepared milk product, allows them to tolerate dairy better. There are also more and more lactose-free products available today such as Lactose-free yogurt, ice cream and cottage cheese.



If, after trying these suggestions, symptoms remain, consider the following:

- People who have symptoms after consuming very small amounts of lactose should read labels to be aware of ingredients in foods or common medications that might be dairy-related.
- Choose other Calcium rich foods to meet requirements such as Calcium-fortified milk substitutes, orange juice, and tofu, canned boney fish, and dark leafy cabbage-family greens.
- Calcium supplements may be necessary, but don't take more than you need or more at one time than your body can digest. There are different forms of calcium supplements appropriate for different conditions.

For more information on how to include dairy in your daily eating, how much Calcium you need, supplements, or any other nutrition-related concern, contact:

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