

Lactose Intolerance

Stark County Health Department
Community Nutrition Clinic
3969 Convenience Circle NW
Canton, Ohio 44718
330.493.9917

WHAT IS LACTOSE INTOLERANCE?



People who have trouble digesting the sugar in milk have "lactose intolerance."

Lactose intolerance is due to a shortage of "lactase," an enzyme in the small intestine.

Some people are born with lactose intolerance. Other people acquire the condition later in life, sometimes due to digestive diseases. Most cases of lactose intolerance

simply develop over time.

Lactose intolerance is different for different people. Some people cannot eat any dairy products at all. Other people only get symptoms after they eat a large amount of dairy products. Most people who are lactose intolerant can tolerate about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk at a meal without feeling any symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

People get symptoms of lactose intolerance 30 minutes to 2 hours after they eat milk or dairy products.

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These symptoms include:

- Stomach bloating
- Gas
- Flatulence
- Stomach cramps
- Diarrhea

Lactose intolerance is different from milk allergy. People with milk allergies can't digest the proteins in milk. They often have symptoms that include breathing problems and rashes.

WHAT PRODUCTS SHOULD I AVOID?

Different people with lactose intolerance can eat different things.

Foods that contain lactose include:

- Milk
- Butter
- Margarine
- Lunch meats
- Other processed meats, such as hot dogs and sausage
- Milk chocolate
- Caramel

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- Some candies
- Cheese
- Cream
- Sour cream
- Cream soups
- Salad dressing
- Sauces
- Yogurt
- Baked goods
- Mixes for pancakes, biscuits, and cookies

If you have severe lactose intolerance, ask your pharmacist if your medications contain lactose.

HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT I AM GETTING THE NUTRIENTS I NEED?

You need to be sure, if you avoid milk and milk products, that you get enough calcium. Daily requirements for calcium are:

- 1000–1300 milligrams for adults and children over 8 years old
- 800 milligrams for children between 4 and 8 years old
- 500 milligrams for children between 1 and 3 years old

You can get calcium by drinking lactose-reduced milk.

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You can also eat green leafy vegetables (like broccoli), dried peas and beans, dried figs, fish with soft, edible bones (like sardines), blackstrap molasses, and seafood.

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Many juices are fortified with calcium, such as orange, apple, and cranberry juice.

If your diet does not have enough calcium, you may need to take a calcium supplement. Calcium supplements made from calcium citrate or calcium carbonate are easily absorbed by the body. Avoid calcium supplements made from oyster shells.

You also need to get enough vitamin D. You can get vitamin D by eating eggs and liver, and by getting enough sunlight.

CAN I USE DIETARY AIDS?

Ask your doctor if you can use dietary aids. Grocery stores sell several products for lactose intolerance.

For example, chewable lactase enzyme tablets help people digest solid foods that contain dairy products.

In addition, lactase enzyme drops can be added to milk.

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