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UTM EatWell

Do you get gas, bloating, “stomach gurgles”, cramps or diarrhea after eating dairy products? You may have lactose intolerance.

Lactose Intolerance

Lactose is the naturally-occurring sugar found in milk and dairy products. An enzyme called **lactase** is needed in order to break down and digest lactose fully.

Without the enzyme lactase, undigested lactose remains in the large intestine and gets fermented by bacteria, causing symptoms like gas, bloating, cramps, and/or diarrhea. Lactose intolerance is not the same as a milk allergy (an immune system reaction to the proteins found in milk).

Managing Lactose Intolerance

Most people can tolerate a small amount of lactose as part of a meal, but eating less lactose-containing foods is the best way to avoid uncomfortable symptoms (see **Foods Containing Lactose**).



Over-the-counter products such as Lactaid® (in tablets, drops, caplets or chewables) can also be used to replace the body’s missing enzyme and help with the digestion of lactose-containing foods. There are also lactase drops that can be added to liquids like milk and cream to help break down the lactose. Speak to your pharmacist about the over-the-counter products that are available.

To reduce the amount of lactose in your diet, limit

Foods Containing Lactose

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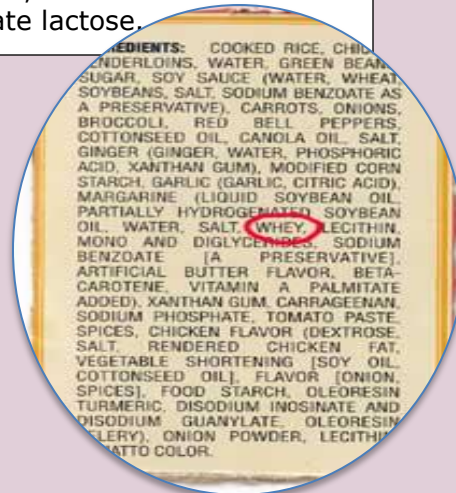
- Sweetened, condensed milk
- Milk (3.25%, 2%, 1%, or skim)
- Goat's milk
- Chocolate milk
- Velveta® cheese
- Whipping cream, sour cream, coffee cream
- Buttermilk
- Yogurt*, kefir*
- Pudding, custard, hot chocolate (made with milk)
- Frozen yogurt, ice cream, ice milk
- Cottage cheese
- Cream cheese
- Feta cheese, ricotta
- Cheese slices
- Most other cheese (mozzarella, cheddar, Swiss, Gouda, Brie, Blue, Camembert, etc.)
- Butter, margarine

*some people may find these easier to digest because of the live bacterial culture (probiotics)

Also read labels and ingredients to avoid foods that contain:

- Milk, milk solids, milk powder, or non-fat milk powder
- Malted milk
- Cheese, or cheese-flavours, curds
- Lactose
- Whey

Note: Foods that contain *lactic acid*, *lactalbumin*, *lactate* and *casein* do **not** indicate lactose.



What to Have Instead

Even with lactose intolerance, it is important to include sources of calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, protein, vitamin B12, vitamin B6 and other nutrients provided by Milk & Alternatives (most adults need 2 servings daily of Milk & Alternatives). Many lactose-free milk products are available including:

- Lactose-free milk
- Lactose-free yogurt
- Lactose-free cheese and cottage cheese
- Non-dairy option such as fortified soy beverage, soy-based yogurt and soy cheese are also good choices.

Note: rice beverage, coconut beverage, and almond beverage are often low in protein, Vitamin D and vitamin B6 and so are less nutritious choices.



Need some FREE professional help?

The Health & Counselling Centre at UTM (Davis Building, Room 1123) has a **Registered Dietitian** who can assess your diet and help you make changes. Call (905) 828-5255 to make an appointment.