

Facts About Lactose Intolerance

What is lactose intolerance?

- › Lactose intolerance refers to the condition of having symptoms, like stomach pain, bloating and diarrhea, after eating foods that contain lactose (a naturally occurring sugar found in milk and other dairy products).
- › It occurs when the body cannot break down all the lactose ingested due to a lack of lactase enzymes or the enzymes are not working as well as they should. It can also be caused temporarily by intestinal infections, surgeries or any other conditions that damage the enzymes.
- › Undigested lactose in the gut can be fermented and lead to gastrointestinal symptoms.
- › It is estimated to affect about 44% of Canadians and is more common in some people, such as African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asians.



Symptoms of Lactose Intolerance

Symptoms usually start between 30 minutes to 2 hours after eating lactose-containing foods.

Common symptoms

Nausea/vomiting

Stomach pain/
cramping

Stomach rumbling

Fullness

Bloating

Gas

Diarrhea

Less common symptoms

Headache

Mouth ulcers

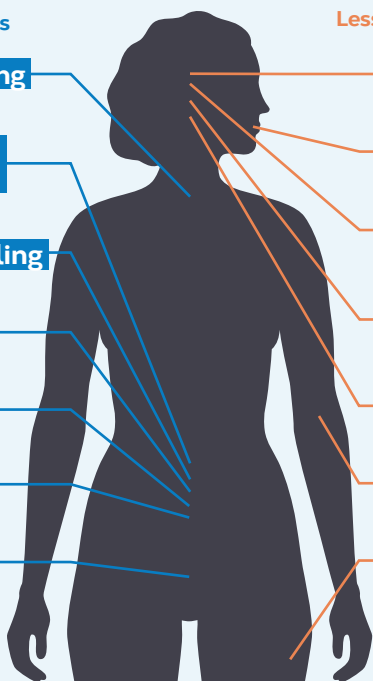
Vertigo

Loss of
concentration

Tiredness

Joint pain

Muscle pain



Do I have to avoid dairy if I am lactose intolerant?

- › Total avoidance of dairy and lactose-containing foods is usually not necessary.
- › Dairy foods have been linked to health benefits. For example, one cup of milk is a source of 15 essential nutrients such as calcium and Vitamin D which help to build and maintain strong and healthy bones.
- › How much lactose you can handle and how bad your symptoms get can be different from person to person.
- › Speak to your pharmacist or other qualified healthcare provider before excluding dairy from your diet.

Tips on How to Incorporate Milk and Dairy Products Into Your Diet If You Are Lactose Intolerant

Add milk and dairy products to your diet a little at a time



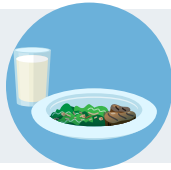
Different people are able to handle different amounts of lactose. Add a little at a time to see how you feel and how much you can tolerate.

Drink/eat small amounts of milk/dairy products at one time



Most people with lactose intolerance can drink up to one cup (250 mL) of milk (12 g of lactose) at a time without feeling symptoms or with only mild symptoms.

Drink/eat lactose-containing products with other food



Studies have found that people with lactose intolerance can usually tolerate up to 15 g of lactose when consumed with other foods.

Space out lactose products throughout the day



Most people with lactose intolerance can tolerate drinking up to two cups (500 mL) of milk (24 g of lactose) spaced out throughout the day.

Replace high-lactose dairy products with ones that contain less lactose



Many hard cheeses (e.g., cheddar or Swiss) have little to no lactose. Some yogurts (e.g., Greek) may have lower amounts of lactose.

Drink lactose-free milk



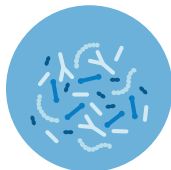
Lactose-free (or reduced-lactose) milk is made by filtering/separating out the lactose from the rest of the milk, or by using lactase enzymes to break down the lactose in milk beforehand.

Take lactase enzymes before first sip or bite of a dairy product



Taking lactase enzyme supplements may allow your body to temporarily digest lactose but more research is needed. Speak to your pharmacist or other qualified healthcare provider for more information.

Take probiotics



Taking certain probiotics may improve symptoms but more research is needed. Discuss with your pharmacist or other qualified healthcare provider for more information.

(Note: These are general tips and may not be applicable and/or effective for all individuals. Speak to your pharmacist or other qualified healthcare provider for more information.)



Examples of Lactose Content of Milk and Dairy Products

Food	Serving Size	Lactose Content (grams)
Milk		
Whole, 2%, 1%, skim	1 cup (250 mL)	9 - 14
Buttermilk	1 cup (250 mL)	9 - 12
Evaporated milk	1 cup (250 mL)	24 - 28
Sweetened condensed milk	1 cup (250 mL)	31 - 50
Cheese		
Cottage	1/2 cup (125 mL)	0.7 - 4
Cheddar (sharp)	1 oz (30 g)	0.4 - 0.6
Mozzarella (part skim, low moisture)	1 oz (30 g)	0.08 - 0.9
American (processed, pasteurized)	1 oz (30 g)	0.5 - 4
Ricotta	1/2 cup (125 mL)	0.3 - 6
Cream cheese	1 oz (30 g)	0.1 - 0.8
Yogurt		
Low fat	1 cup (250 mL)	4 - 17
Other		
Cream (light, whipping, sour)	1 tbsp (15 mL)	0.4 - 0.6
Ice cream	1/2 cup (125 mL)	2 - 6
Sherbet	1/2 cup (125 mL)	0.6 - 2

(Note: Lactose content amounts are approximate values and may vary by product, brand, recipe, etc.)

Other Lactose-containing Foods

Many foods contain milk or lactose as an ingredient and may cause symptoms.

Check the ingredient list and look for words such as:

*Milk, milk byproducts,
dry milk powder, dry milk solids*

Lactose

Whey

Examples of Lactose-containing Foods

Waffles, muffins, biscuits

Cakes and cake mixes

Ranch dressing

Artificial whipped toppings

Vegetable or chip dips

Milk chocolate

Milk bread

Creamed, scalloped, mashed or au gratin potatoes

Store-bought gravy or sauce mixes

Breaded or creamed fish and meats

Powdered meal replacement supplements

Custard, pudding

Cheese-flavoured snacks

Lactose in Medications

Lactose is commonly used as a filler in medications, but the amount is usually very small and most lactose intolerant individuals will typically not feel symptoms. However, some people may be more sensitive and/or may wish to avoid lactose-containing medications. You can always speak to your pharmacist to learn more about the availability of lactose-free formulations.

Calcium and Vitamin D

- › Although a person with diagnosed lactose intolerance may need to adjust their intake of milk and/or dairy products, it is still important to make sure you are getting enough nutrients, especially calcium and vitamin D.
- › Calcium can be found in other food sources such as:
 - › Calcium-fortified orange juice
 - › Dark, leafy green vegetables
 - › Almonds and beans



To find out more about how you can meet your calcium needs, scan this QR code.


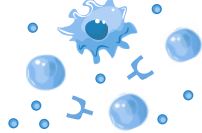
DISCLAIMER

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Lactose Intolerance OR Milk Allergy?

Both of these conditions can be triggered by dairy foods and can easily be confused for one another. Some differences include:

Lactose Intolerance	Milk Allergy
	
Lack of lactase enzymes leading to stomach irritation from undigested lactose	Immune system reaction leading to allergy symptoms such as hives, swelling of the mouth, wheezing, and itchiness
Non-life-threatening	Can be life-threatening
Triggered by lactose	Triggered by cow's milk proteins
Usually starts in adolescence or early adulthood	Usually starts in infancy

If you suspect you might have one of these conditions, speak to your primary care provider for an assessment and diagnosis.

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