
Food Sources of Lactose

Information about Lactose

- Lactose is a natural sugar found in milk and dairy products. Our body breaks down (digests) lactose with an enzyme called lactase. Lactase helps your body absorb this nutrient.

Information about Lactose Intolerance

- Lactose intolerance is when your body does not have enough lactase to break down lactose. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, gas, cramps, nausea, and diarrhea.
- Individuals with lactose intolerance may have the symptoms described above after consuming lactose containing foods.
- If you think you may be lactose intolerant, it's important to have this confirmed by your doctor to be sure it's not something more serious.
- Your lactose tolerance may be improved if you:
 - eat small amounts of lactose containing foods daily,
 - include lactose-containing foods as part of a meal,
 - drink lactose containing beverages (or milk) with food.

Lactose Content of Some Common Foods

Lactose is found in all milk products and may be added as an ingredient to many different foods and beverages. The best thing to do is to read the ingredient list to determine if the product contains a lactose containing food. Food items to look out for include: milk, milk solids, whey, lactose, curds, cheese flavors, nonfat milk powder, non fat milk solids, sweet or sour cream, buttermilk, and malted milk.

Use the following table to help you choose foods that are low in lactose.

<i>Food</i>	<i>Serving size</i>	<i>Lactose (g)</i>
<i>Vegetables and Fruit</i>		
These foods contain very little lactose. Products that may contain lactose include those prepared with milk or milk products (e.g. creamed vegetables, mashed potatoes). Check ingredients list.		
<i>Grain Products</i>		
These foods contain very little lactose. Products that may contain lactose include those prepared with milk or milk products such as waffles, crepes, pancakes, pasta or noodle mixes, and some breakfast cereals (hot and cold), baked goods like muffins.		
<i>Milk and Alternatives</i>		
<i>Milk</i>		
Sweetened, condensed	125 mL (½ cup)	15
Homogenized 3.3%, 2%, 1%, skim	250 mL (1 cup)	13
Hot chocolate, homemade, 3.3% or 2% milk	250 mL (1 cup)	12
Goat's milk	250 mL (1 cup)	11
Chocolate milk	250 mL (1 cup)	10
Buttermilk	250 mL (1 cup)	10
Evaporated milk	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	1.5
Lactaid® or Lacteeze® milk	250 mL (1 cup)	less than 1
<i>Milk based desserts</i>		
Ice milk	125 mL (½ cup)	9

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Pudding, dry mix made with milk	125 mL (½ cup)	6
Ice cream	125 mL (½ cup)	3-6
Frozen yogurt	125 mL (½ cup)	4.5
Sherbet	125 mL (½ cup)	2
<i>Cheese</i>		
Cottage cheese, creamed	125 mL (½ cup)	3
Cottage cheese, uncreamed	125 mL (½ cup)	2
Cream cheese	50 g (1 ½ oz)	1.5
Hard cheese (mozzarella, Swiss/emmental, Parmesan, cheddar)	50 g (1 ½ oz)	less than 1
<i>Milk Alternatives</i>		
Soy beverage	250 mL (1 cup)	0
Rice beverage	250 mL (1 cup)	0
Soy yogurt	175 g (¾ cup)	0
<i>Miscellaneous</i>		
Yogurt	175 g (¾ cup)	4
Sour cream	125 mL (½ cup)	4
Whipping cream	125 mL (½ cup)	3
Half and half cream	15 mL (1 Tbsp)	less than 1
<i>Meat and Alternatives</i>		
<p>These foods contain very little lactose. Products that may include lactose include those prepared with milk or milk products such as some processed meat, breaded or battered meat or fish, commercial egg substitutes, scrambled eggs, soufflé.</p>		

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Fats and Oils

These foods contain very little lactose. Products that may include lactose include those prepared with milk or milk products such butter or margarine made with milk or whey powder, salad dressings (e.g. ranch style or buttermilk).

Other Foods

Prepared foods made with milk or milk products may include lactose including commercial gravy or sauce mixes, vegetable or chip dips, soups, chips or snack crackers (e.g. cheese or ranch flavoured), sugar substitutes made with lactose (e.g. equal®), artificial whipped toppings, powdered meal replacement supplements.

Source: "Canadian Nutrient File 2007b" www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php [Accessed April 2, 2009] and "Manual of Clinical Dietetics, 6th ed." (p.212), by Chicago Dietetic Association et al., 2000, Chicago: American Dietetic Association. Copyright 2000 by the American Dietetic Association. Used with permission.

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