

# Managing Lactose Intolerance

## Why This Diet Is Important

This diet is designed to reduce the amount of lactose in your diet. Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products, but may also be added to other foods. Lactose intolerance is caused by the total or partial lack of the lactase enzyme in your intestine. This enzyme is needed to breakdown lactose. If you are lactose intolerant (and as many as 75% of the world's total population are) you may benefit from reducing the amount of lactose in your diet. Eating less lactose can prevent or reduce bloating, gas, cramping, nausea and diarrhea which are caused by eating foods that have lactose. The amount of lactose you can tolerate depends on your symptoms. Foods that are lower in lactose are listed below.

## Low-Lactose Foods to Choose

- Soy Milk
- Lactose-Hydrolyzed Milk (e.g. Lactaid®, Lacteeze®)
- Rice Milk
- Lactose-Free Nutrition Supplements (e.g. Ensure®, Resource®, Boost®)

## Foods That May Be Tolerated Better Than Milk

These foods contain some lactose, but in smaller amounts than in regular milk. Try eating small amounts of these foods. If eating these foods does not cause you discomfort, you can try increasing the amount slowly.

Cheese	Cottage Cheese	Sour Cream
Yogurt	Whipping Cream	Half and Half Cream
Chocolate Milk	Ice Cream	



## Steps you can take

- Limit your intake of foods that cause you discomfort.
- Eat lactose-containing foods or beverages with a meal rather than alone.
- Read the labels on foods for hidden sources of lactose.

**Check the ingredient list for these words which may indicate that a food contains lactose:** milk, milk solids, whey, curds, cheese flavours, non-fat milk powder, non-fat milk solids, sweet or sour cream, buttermilk, malted milk

- In Canada, lactose-free means that there is no detectable lactose in the food using an acceptable method for measuring lactose. Lactose-reduced may be used to describe a product that has had the amount of lactose in the product reduced by at least 25%.
- Check with a Pharmacist to find out if any of your medications contain lactose as it may not be listed on the label. The Pharmacist should be able to provide a lactose-free substitute.
- Try using commercially available lactase enzyme drops or tablets to reduce the lactose in milk or dairy products.

**Note:** Many foods that contain lactose are also important sources of calcium, protein, and vitamins A, D, and B12. If you avoid or seldom have lactose-containing foods, you will need to find other sources of these nutrients. The following suggestions may help.

### Calcium

Lactose-free sources of calcium include canned salmon and sardines, fortified soy and rice beverages, and calcium-fortified fruit juices\*. Speak to a Dietitian to see if you should consider taking a calcium supplement.



