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# Tips for Lactose Intolerance

If you are lactose intolerant, you have trouble digesting lactose. Lactose is a sugar found in milk and other dairy products. Many people are lactose intolerant. Lactose intolerance may affect your health if it prevents you from getting enough nutrients, such as calcium and vitamin D. Undigested lactose can cause unpleasant symptoms. Symptoms may include gas, bloating, pain, diarrhea, and nausea. To help reduce symptoms, look for ways to limit the amount of lactose you eat. You can also take a lactase supplement before you eat dairy products.

## Finding your limit

People with lactose intolerance may think they can't eat or drink any dairy products. This is often not true. Many people with lactose intolerance can eat or drink small amounts of dairy products without symptoms. To find your own limit, keep track of what you eat and drink. Write down when you have symptoms. Learn how much and what kinds of dairy products you can handle.

## Tips to reduce symptoms

- Choose low-lactose or lactose-free dairy products. These are widely available. They include products like milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream, among others.
- Eat foods with active cultures, such as yogurt. Active cultures make lactose easier to digest.
- Eat or drink dairy products with other foods to lessen symptoms.
- Add milk and milk products to your diet a little at a time and see how you feel.
- Use fruit juice or lactose-free milk (for instance, soy or almond) to replace some or all of the milk in recipes.
- Take lactase enzyme tablets with dairy products to help prevent symptoms.
- Don't eat many high-lactose foods (such as milk, butter, and ice cream) at one time.



## Eat other calcium-rich foods

If you eat less dairy, you may be getting less calcium and vitamin D. Ask your healthcare provider about calcium or vitamin D supplements. Also, eat more dairy-free, calcium-rich foods, such as:

- Broccoli, lettuce greens, kale, bok choy (Chinese cabbage), turnip greens.
- Fish with edible bones (canned salmon or sardines).
- Alfalfa sprouts, soy sprouts.
- Tofu, soybeans, pinto beans, navy beans.
- Almonds, sesame seeds.
- Calcium-fortified orange juice, soy drink, rice drink.
- Oranges.

Be aware that the calcium from these foods varies. It may not be as well absorbed by the body as calcium from dairy products. Vitamin D helps your body absorb and use calcium. Be sure to eat foods that contain vitamin D, such as eggs and certain kinds of fish, such as salmon. Also, being outside in the sunlight helps your body make vitamin D.

## Substitutions

Dairy	Substitute
Milk, cream	Soy drink, rice drink, nondairy creamer, lactose-free milk
Cheese	Tofu (soy) cheese, some aged cheeses (harder cheese has less lactose than softer cheese)

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Butter,  
margarine

Milk-free margarine, vegetable oil

Ice cream

Fruit sorbet, juice bars, lactose-free ice cream