



The Lowdown on Lactose Intolerance: Making the most of milk products

There's no doubt that most Americans need more calcium. Seventy-five percent of the calcium in our food supply comes from dairy foods. However, some people have trouble digesting natural milk sugar (lactose). Since they do not have enough of the necessary enzyme (lactase), they may experience symptoms after drinking milk or eating other foods with lactose. These symptoms may include gas, bloating, stomach cramps, and diarrhea.

There is good news for people with lactose intolerance: There are easy ways to enjoy the delicious taste and nutrient-rich content of milk products without discomfort. Recent research confirms that some people with lactose intolerance can drink one, or even two, glasses of milk over the course of a day without symptoms. There are also lactase pills and drops that allow those with serious lactose intolerance to fully enjoy all milk products. So, check out the tips below and start boosting your calcium intake today!

6 Ways to Enjoy Dairy Foods When Lactose Causes Problems

1. Pair milk with meals.

Drink milk (1 cup or less) along with your meals and snacks. If you still get unpleasant symptoms, try even smaller amounts more often throughout the day.

2. Go for older and wiser.

Try aged or ripened cheeses like Swiss and cheddar. They contain little, if any, lactose, and are tasty sources of protein, calcium, and other essential nutrients.

3. Get some "culture."

Choose yogurts with "live and active cultures." These helpful bacteria prevent symptoms, by acting like lactase to break down lactose in the digestive tract.

4. Chill out.

Since ice cream and frozen yogurt contain less lactose than milk, small servings may cause little or no discomfort. Cool down with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a low-fat variety – topped with fruit.

5. Reduce it.

Take lactase tablets just prior to eating foods with lactose. Try lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk products available in the dairy case (or make your own with lactase drops).

6. Go to the Pros.

Contact your doctor, registered dietitian, pharmacist, or other health provider for more help on ways to enjoy milk and milk products when you are lactose intolerant.



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