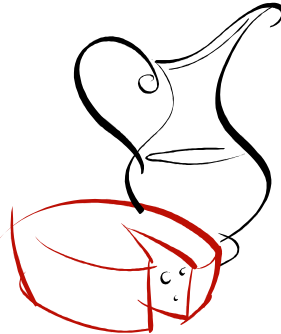




## Low Lactose Diet



Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products. Small amounts may be found in processed foods and medications. Lactase is an enzyme made by the small bowel that helps to digest lactose. If lactase is not present then the lactose does not get broken down or absorbed and it passes directly into the large bowel. Undigested lactose in the large bowel causes the symptoms of lactose intolerance.

### **Why do I have lactose intolerance?**

Lactose intolerance can be a temporary condition following damage to the cells of the small bowel. This may occur after a course of antibiotics, a bout of diarrhea or with a flare up of Crohn's disease or Ulcerative Colitis. Once the cells that produce the enzyme have recovered you will be able to digest lactose again. Lactose intolerance can be long term if it is an inherited condition.

### **What are the symptoms of lactose intolerance?**

When the undigested lactose travels to the large bowel, it is used by the bacteria of the large bowel which causes gas, bloating, cramping and watery diarrhea.

Lactose intolerance is dose related. By eating less lactose you can prevent or reduce these symptoms. Your level of intolerance can be very different when compared to another person with lactose intolerance.

## General Guidelines

1. Start off by avoiding as many lactose sources in the diet as possible until your symptoms stop. Check with your pharmacist about medications that may contain lactose.
2. Check labels for hidden sources of lactose – milk solids or powder, whey, curds, cheese flavour.
3. Use commercially produced lactose free milk products such as Lactaid® or Lacteeze ®milk.
4. Gradually add foods with lactose back into your diet to determine your level of tolerance to lactose. Start with foods and fluids that are lowest in lactose content first – see table – Lactose Content of Common Foods.
5. Taking smaller amounts of lactose spread throughout the day may help with managing symptoms. Example - ¼ cup milk four times daily instead of 1 cup at breakfast. Try drinking milk with a meal instead of on an empty stomach.
6. Chocolate milk or higher fat milks are sometimes better tolerated than low fat milk.
7. Choose yogurt with active cultures – the bacteria will help with some of the digestion of lactose.
8. Lactaid ® tablets can be taken before meals to assist with the digestion of lactose containing foods. Lactaid® drops can be added to regular milk to reduce the lactose content before it is consumed.
9. Lactose containing foods are excellent sources of calcium. Milk is also an excellent source of vitamin D. Discuss your requirements for calcium and vitamin D and food sources of these important nutrients with your dietitian.



## Lactose Content of Common Foods

Product	Portion	Lactose (g)
Sweetened, condensed milk	½ cup (125 ml)	15
Chocolate milk	1 cup (250 ml)	12*
Evaporated milk	½ cup (125ml)	12
Milk – whole, 2%, 1%, skim	1 cup (250 ml)	11
Buttermilk	1 cup (250 ml)	10
Ice milk	½ cup (125 ml)	9
Ice cream	½ cup (125 ml)	6
Half and half	½ cup (125 ml)	5
Yogurt, low fat	1 cup (250 ml)	5
Sour cream or light cream	½ cup (125 ml)	4
Cottage cheese, creamed	½ cup (125 ml)	3
Whipping cream	½ cup (125 ml)	3
Cottage cheese, uncreamed	½ cup (125 ml)	2
Sherbet, orange	½ cup (125 ml)	2
Cheese ( swiss, cheddar, blue, parmesean, cream)	1 oz (30g)	1
Butter	1 tsp (5 ml)	Trace
Lactose reduced milk – Lactaid® Lacteeze®	1 cup (250 ml)	<1

\* chocolate milk often well tolerated

**Dietitian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_