Low Lactose Diet
Low Lactose Diet

Some people have trouble digesting lactose, the natural sugar found in milk. This is called “lactose intolerance”. Some common symptoms include gas, bloating, cramping, nausea, and diarrhea.

Most people with lactose intolerance can tolerate some milk and milk products in their diet.

The following suggestions may help you determine your tolerance to milk and milk products. Use the table “Lactose Content of Milk and Dairy Products” to choose foods with different amounts of lactose.

1. Avoid all milk and dairy products for 2 weeks. This includes milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, ice cream, pudding, cream soups, and cream sauces.

2. After 2 weeks, try low lactose milk and dairy. Most people are able to digest these foods in small amounts.

3. If you tolerate the low lactose products, then try foods that have moderate amounts of lactose. (If these foods cause gas, bloating, or diarrhea, you may want to try Lactaid ® or Lacteeze ® tablets.)

4. You may be able to tolerate high lactose foods in small amounts.

Add new foods one at a time. If you have any symptoms, try a smaller serving size.

If you cannot tolerate milk or milk products, you may need a calcium and vitamin D supplement. Talk about this with your dietitian or doctor.
# Lactose content of milk and dairy products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lactose content</th>
<th>Low lactose (less than 1 gram per serving)</th>
<th>Moderate lactose (1-3 grams per serving)</th>
<th>High lactose (more than 3 grams per serving)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lactaid® or Lacteeze® milk:</strong></td>
<td>1/2-1 cup (125-250 ml)</td>
<td>Milk (whole, 2%, 1%, skim): 1-2 ounces (30-60 ml) for tea or coffee</td>
<td>Milk (whole, 2%, 1%, skim): ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cream:</strong></td>
<td>Light, half and half, or whipping cream: 1 Tablespoon (15 ml)</td>
<td>Cheese:</td>
<td>Cream soups: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheese:</strong></td>
<td>Grated parmesan: 1-2 Tablespoons (15-30 ml)</td>
<td>- Ricotta, Feta, Bleu: 1 ounce (30 g)</td>
<td>Custard, puddings: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Camembert, Limburger: 2-3 ounces (60-90 g)</td>
<td>- Processed cheese slices: 1-2 slices</td>
<td>Ice cream, frozen yogurt: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheddar, Gouda, Mozzarella, Swiss: 1.5 ounces (50 g)</td>
<td>- Cottage cheese: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
<td>Sour cream: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Butter:</strong></td>
<td>1 tsp (5 ml)</td>
<td>- Cream cheese: 2 Tablespoons (30 g)</td>
<td><strong>Sherbet:</strong> ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yogurt*: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
<td><strong>Yogurt</strong>: ½ cup (125 ml)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Yogurt is a high lactose food but is often well tolerated. Choose yogurt that has “live cultures”, according to the package information.
Tips for tolerance

• Eat only small amounts of lactose-containing foods at one time. Spread out these foods during the day.

• Enjoy lactose-containing food and drinks as part of a meal rather than alone.

• Read food labels to check for the following ingredients. They all have lactose:
  › Milk
  › Milk solids
  › Whey
  › Curds
  › Cheese flavours
  › Nonfat milk powder
  › Nonfat milk solids
  › Sweet or sour cream
  › Buttermilk
  › Malted milk
More tips

• **Limit milk to ½ cup at a time.** Drink it with meals. If you are still unable to tolerate milk, you may want to try a lactose-free alternative:
  › Lactaid® or Lacteeze® milk.
  › Soy or rice milk. Check the label and choose products that have added calcium and vitamin D.
  › Try an enzyme supplement such as Lactaid® or Lacteeze® to help you digest lactose. These are available in a tablet form that you take with meals, or a liquid drop form that can be added to milk. Talk to your pharmacist for more information.
If you have any questions, please ask.  
We are here to help you.

Notes:
Looking for more health information?
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles, and online health information.
For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to www.publiclibraries.ns.ca

Capital Health promotes a smoke-free and scent-free environment.
Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Capital Health, Nova Scotia
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Food and Nutrition Services
Designed by: Capital Health Library Services, Patient Education Team
Printed by: Dalhousie University Print Centre

The information in this brochure is provided for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

LC85-0553 Revised April 2014
The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years.