Lactose Free Diet

Lactose is a carbohydrate that is found mainly in milk and milk products, as well as in foods with added milk or whey. Lactose must be digested by the enzyme in order to be used by the body. Lactose intolerance occurs when there is a shortage of lactase.

When your body is not able to digest lactose, you may feel sick to your stomach (*nausea*), bloating, cramping, gas and diarrhea.

TYPES OF LACTASE DEFICIENCY

- **Primary lactase deficiency.** This is the most common type. It is characterized by a slow decrease in lactase activity.
- **Secondary lactase deficiency.** This occurs following injury to the small intestinal mucosa as a result of diseases such as celiac disease, nontropical sprue, infectious gastroenteritis (stomach virus), malnutrition, parasites, or inflammatory bowel disease. It can also occur after treatment with medications that kill germs (*antibiotics*) or cancer drugs, or as a result of surgery.

Tolerance to lactose varies widely, and each person must determine how much milk can be consumed without developing symptoms. Drinking smaller portions of milk throughout the day may be helpful. Some studies suggest that slowing gastric emptying may help increase tolerance of milk products. This may be done by:

- Consuming milk or milk products with a meal rather than alone.
- Using milk with a higher fat content.

There are many dairy products that may be tolerated better than milk by some people:

- Cheese (especially aged cheese) - the lactose content is much lower than in milk.
- The use of cultured dairy products such as yogurt, buttermilk, cottage cheese, and sweet acidophilus milk (Kefir) for lactase-deficient individuals is usually well tolerated. This is because the healthy bacteria help digest lactose.
- Lactose-hydrolyzed milk (Lactaid®) contains 40-90% less lactose than milk and may also be well tolerated.

ADEQUACY

These diets may be deficient in calcium, riboflavin, and vitamin D, according to the Recommended Dietary Allowances of the National Research Council. Depending on individual tolerances and the use of milk substitutes, milk, or other dairy products, these recommendations may be met.

SPECIAL NOTES

- Lactose is a carbohydrates. The major food source is dairy products. Reading food labels is important. Many products contain lactose even when they are not made from milk. Look for the following words: whey, milk solids, dry milk solids, nonfat dry milk powder. Typical sources of lactose other than dairy products include breads, candies, cold cuts, prepared and processed foods, and commercial sauces and gravies.
- All foods must be prepared without milk, cream, or other dairy foods.
- A vitamin/mineral supplement may be necessary. Consult your physician or Registered Dietitian.
- Lactose also is found in many prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- Soy milk and lactose-free supplements may be used as an alternative to milk.

SAMPLE MENU*

- Breakfast

- Orange Juice.
- Banana.
- Bran flakes.
- Nondairy Creamer.
- Vienna Bread (toasted).
- Butter or milk-free margarine.
- Coffee or tea.

➢ Noon Meal

- Chicken Breast.
- Rice.
- Green beans.
- Butter or milk-free margarine.
- Fresh melon.
- Coffee or tea.

➢ Evening Meal

- Roast Beef.
- Baked potato.
- Butter or milk-free margarine.
- Broccoli.
- Lettuce salad with vinegar and oil dressing.
- Angel food cake.
- Coffee or tea.

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