

Lactose Intolerance & Your Child

As a parent, you try your best to keep your children healthy, which isn't always easy. Today, with new information about lactose intolerance, making sure your child is getting adequate nutrition during his or her growing years is easier than ever.

Studies show that people who have trouble digesting lactose can usually still enjoy dairy foods!¹ This is good news for you and your child! For children, the important benefits of calcium and vitamin D have long been recognized. Naturally calcium-rich milk, both regular and lactose-free, fortified with vitamin D is one of the most readily accessible sources of these bone-building nutrients.¹

Q What is lactose intolerance?

A Lactose intolerance is one type of food sensitivity. People who are lactose intolerant don't have enough *lactase*, the enzyme that breaks down the natural sugar found in milk, lactose.

Children with lactase deficiency may not experience symptoms until late adolescence or adulthood.

Symptoms of intolerance may include gas, bloating, stomach cramps and diarrhea. If your young child is experiencing symptoms, there may be an underlying medical cause, so it is important to visit your doctor.

Q How do I know if my child is lactose intolerant?

A If you *suspect* your child has lactose intolerance, discuss it with his/her doctor. If the diagnosis is lactose intolerance, many children can still consume dairy products, which are important for bone health and overall growth. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends children with lactose intolerance consume dairy foods when appropriate in order to get calcium, vitamin D, protein and other nutrients essential for bone health and overall growth.³ Choose low-fat and fat-free dairy first.



According to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, "Research has linked dairy intake to improved bone health, especially in children and adolescents."²

Q Can my child still consume dairy foods if he or she is lactose intolerant?

A Most likely, yes!

Try these tips to help your child continue to enjoy low-fat and fat-free dairy foods:

Sip it and pair it. Serve your child a small amount of milk at a time. You could even try using milk to make a tasty fruit smoothie! Or, pair milk with solid foods to help slow digestion and allow the body more time to digest lactose. Try the classic combination of milk and cereal.

Cheese (and calcium) please. Hard cheeses contain minimal amounts of lactose making them easier to digest. Try Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Monterey Jack, and Mozzarella.

Yummy options. Chocolate milk has the same nutrients as white milk and there are tasty lactose-free options. Yogurt and Greek-style yogurt are also delicious and nutritious choices, and contain live and active cultures that help to digest lactose.

Try something new. Offer lactose-free milk and milk products to your child. They are real milk products, just without the lactose. They provide the same nutrients as regular dairy foods and taste great!

Choose wisely away from home. Your child spends a lot of time at school, and the school cafeteria offers many opportunities to implement the tips listed above. Encourage your child to choose lactose-free milk or chocolate milk with breakfast (if available) and lunch and to look for menu items that include cheese and yogurt. Schools have the option to offer lactose-free and reduced-lactose milk (fat-free and/or low-fat) as part of school meals.⁴ Talk to your school cafeteria staff about special dietary requests for your child.

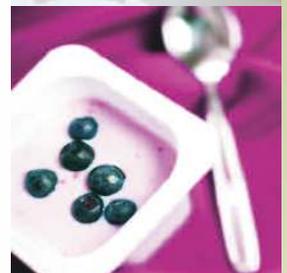
These organizations support a dairy-first approach to lactose intolerance and the 3 daily servings* of nutrient rich, low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products, recommended by the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

eat right. Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics



¹ Suchy FJ, Brannon PM, Carpenter TO, et al. NIH Consensus Development Conference Statement: lactose intolerance and health, *NIH Consensus Stat Sci Statements* 2010; 27:1-27.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 8th Edition, December 2015. p 17.

³ Heyman MB for the Committee on Nutrition, American Academy of Pediatrics. From the American Academy of Pediatrics: Lactose intolerance in infants, children, and adolescents. *Peds.* 2006; 118: 1279-1286.

⁴ Federal Register. Rules and Regulations. 2012; 77(17): 4095.

*Daily Recommendations—The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 3 daily servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy foods for those 9 years and older, 2½ servings for children 4-8 years, and 2 for children 2-3 years.