

## Lactose Intolerance

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Do you find that dairy products give you gas, or cause stomach cramps, nausea, or diarrhea? If you experience these symptoms after drinking milk or consuming dairy products you may be lactose intolerant. However, you are not alone. According to the Ohio State University Medical Center, 30 to 50 million Americans (adults and children) are lactose intolerant. Lactose intolerance occurs when you do not have enough lactase, an enzyme in the intestines which helps digest lactose. When we don't have enough lactase, lactose stays in the intestine. The bacteria in the intestine ferment the lactose and we get gas, bloating, cramps and diarrhea.

Do you have to abandon your milk and cookies forever? The answer is **maybe not!** How you consume dairy foods can influence whether you get symptoms or not. If you are careful, you may be able to drink up to 2 cups of milk per day. Here are some tips to try:

- Consume dairy foods with meals instead of between meals.
- Start with small amounts of a dairy product several times a day instead of a large amount all at once.
- Try yogurt with active cultures. The bacteria in the cultures actually produce some lactase that may help digest the lactose.
- Use hard cheeses like Colby, Cheddar, Swiss and Parmesan, that are lower in lactose.
- Try dairy products with lactase added to them. The added lactase helps to digest all or part of the lactose. Some brands work better than others, so if one kind doesn't help, try another.
- Take tablets containing lactase before you consume dairy foods.
- Add lactase to regular milk to pre-digest some of the lactose.

If these ideas don't work, you need to find other ways to include calcium in your diet. Depending on your age and gender, you may need up to 1300 milligrams of calcium a day. There are many other foods that contain calcium. Check out this list of calcium rich foods:

Sardines, 3oz., 371 mg  
Salmon with bones, 3 oz., 167 mg  
Fortified Soy milk, 1 cup, 300 mg  
Tofu, 1 cup, 204 mg  
Orange juice (that is calcium fortified), 1 cup, 266 mg  
Orange, 1 medium, 52 mg  
Broccoli, 1 cup cooked, 160 mg  
Collard greens, 1 cup cooked, 358 mg  
Turnip greens, 1 cup cooked, 250 mg  
Kale, 1 cup cooked, 180 mg  
Mustard greens, 1 cup cooked, 152 mg  
Blackstrap Molasses, 1 Tbs., 172 mg  
Pinto beans, 1 cup, 103 mg  
Baked beans, 1 cup, 154 mg  
Fortified Cereal, varies 100-1000 mg

To tell how many milligrams of calcium a food contains, look at the Nutrition Facts label. The Daily Value for calcium will be listed. This is a percentage, but if you add a zero to that number, you will get the milligrams of calcium the food contains. This only works for the Daily Value for calcium, and not the other nutrients, as calcium's Daily Value is 1000

milligrams per day. If the food has less than 2% of the Daily Value for calcium, the Daily Value may not be listed.

If you still need more calcium, take a calcium supplement. Calcium carbonate and calcium citrate are well absorbed and available in most pharmacies. If you do not take another supplement containing Vitamin D, take a calcium supplement with Vitamin D. Do not take calcium supplements made from shark cartilage, bone meal or dolomite. They may contain lead. Look for the letters "USP" on the label to be sure that the supplement is pure and dissolves well. Take calcium carbonate with meals for the best absorption. Calcium citrate can be taken anytime.

Calcium from foods or supplements is absorbed better if no more than 500 milligrams is consumed at a time. So a highly fortified breakfast cereal that has 1000 milligrams of calcium per serving may not be as well absorbed as a cup of calcium enriched orange juice, for breakfast, a carton of yogurt eaten at lunch and a serving of turnip greens eaten at supper.