



# Lactose intolerance

Lactose is the natural sugar in milk. A person with lactose intolerance lacks enough of the enzyme, lactase, to digest this sugar.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Nausea
- Cramps
- Bloating
- Gas
- Diarrhea

These symptoms start about 30 minutes to 2 hours after you eat or drink foods with lactose.

## CAUSES

- The body can't make the enzyme lactase. This can occur from birth or over time.
- Digestive diseases
- Injury to the small intestine

Asian Americans, African Americans, and American Indians are more prone to lactose intolerance.

## TREATMENT

Symptoms can be controlled with self-care measures.



## TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Are nausea, cramps, bloating, gas, and/or diarrhea not controlled with self-care?

**NO** **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



**USE SELF-CARE**



- Eat fewer dairy foods. Some people with lactose intolerance can tolerate dairy foods if they have small amounts at a time.
- Have lactose-free dairy products. Examples are buttermilk, yogurt, and acidophilus milks.
- Take lactase tablets or drips before you eat or drink milk products.
- Eat non-dairy foods that contain calcium, such as broccoli and almonds.
- Avoid products with milk, milk solids, and dairy whey. Have fortified plant milks instead. Products marked “parve” are milk free.
- Read food labels. Many food products contain small amounts of lactose. These include bread and other baked goods, instant mashed potatoes, breakfast and diet drinks and bars, and mixes for biscuits, cookies, and pancakes.