



*Nutrition*  
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# LEARNING THE ROPES: LACTOSE & DAIRY FREE EATING

## THE FACTS:

### LACTOSE INTOLERANCE VS MILK ALLERGY

Lactose intolerance occurs when the body lacks adequate amounts of the enzyme lactase, which is required to breakdown lactose (sugar) in dairy products. This undigested lactose travels through the gut, causing the symptoms associated with lactose intolerance. This condition can be transient and completely avoiding dairy is often unnecessary in managing symptoms.

Milk allergy is an immune-mediated reaction to a protein in milk—eliminating all traces of dairy in the diet is mandatory. One of the most common food allergens, milk can cause a range of mild or severe symptoms: flushing of the skin, drop in blood pressure, faintness, anxiety, trouble speaking, loss of consciousness or swelling of the eyes, face or throat. Should you experience any of these symptoms after ingesting milk or milk products, it is important to seek medical attention right away.

### FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE—TRUST YOUR GUT

Lactose intolerance is not an uncommon phenomenon: an estimated 30 to 50 million people in the US experience symptoms related to lactose maldigestion. Prevalence tends to be highest in Asian and First Nations communities and lowest in those of Northern European descent (only 2% prevalence). Symptoms of lactose intolerance generally occur 30 minutes to 2 hours post meal and may include pain, bloating, gas and diarrhea.

#### Pass the Test!

The current gold standard for diagnosing lactose intolerance in adults is the breath hydrogen test... ask your physician!

### THE ICE CREAM LOVER'S GUIDE TO LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

Lactose intolerance doesn't mean giving up dairy...unless you want to. The simplest way to ease tummy troubles is to take lactase enzyme to help you digest dairy. The degree of lactose intolerance varies among individuals. With mild intolerance, many people can take small amounts of lactose (approx 6 grams) without issue. Try drinking ½ cup of milk at one sitting and choose yogurts and hard cheeses as they contain less lactose. Another tip is to only drink milk with a meal, to slow down transit time in the gut. Milk with the lactose already broken down is available, as is lactose free cheese.

This handout is meant for educational purposes only. The information contained is not meant to replace consultation with a Registered Dietitian or qualified health professional.

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**Have a nutrition question?**

Ask Desiree, the Choices Dietitian at [nutrition@choicesmarket.com](mailto:nutrition@choicesmarket.com)

## LIVING WITHOUT DAIRY

There are many reasons for going dairy free - some avoid dairy products for ethical or environmental reasons. People on a detox diet generally avoid all major allergens, including milk. Others with severe lactose intolerance may have to avoid dairy altogether.

Newly diagnosed Celiacs often experience lactose intolerance, which tends to resolve once the gut has healed. Also, IBS sufferers may experiment with lactose avoidance for symptom control. For many, dairy foods can be a healthy addition to their diet. If you choose live without dairy, a Registered Dietitian or health professional can help ensure you get all of the nutrients you need.

## NO BONES ABOUT IT!

Dairy products are a convenient source of many bone building nutrients: calcium, vitamin D, magnesium and phosphorus are all abundant in milk products. While some controversy exists about the bioavailability of calcium from other sources, it isn't difficult to meet your daily needs from non-dairy sources. These include dark leafy greens, almonds, sesame seeds and tofu. Magnesium and phosphorus are abundant in whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds. A simple multivitamin can help fill in the gaps but isn't always necessarily when you are eating the right foods.

## ALTERNATIVE LIVING

Looking for dairy alternatives? Several vegetable "milks" are available: from soy to quinoa, rice to hemp, each beverage has a unique taste and nutrient profile. Ensure that your beverage is fortified with vitamin B12, calcium and vitamin D to reduce risk of deficiency. A word to the wise: most alternative milks, except soy, are not a nutritional substitute for milk—rice and almond milk, for example, are very low in protein. Know your nutrients! If you choose a low protein or unfortified beverage, be sure to make up for those nutrients somewhere else. If you are cutting out dairy entirely, watch out for some cheese alternatives, as many still have casein, a milk protein. Look for products labeled as vegan to be sure they are dairy free.

## ALLERGY SAVVY LABEL READING

Thanks to those pesky food manufacturers, foods continue to become more complex! This forces you to be a bit of a food sleuth to keep dairy out of your diet. Many manufacturers are starting to place allergen warnings on their labels such as "Allergen Warning" or "May Contain...". For those packages that aren't clearly labeled, read ingredient lists carefully. Milk is not the only source of dairy. See our list of some common "sneaky" ingredients!

### How much calcium do I need?

9 - 19 years: 1300mg  
19 - 50 years: 1000mg  
Over 50: 1200mg

### How much vitamin D3 do I need?

1 - 50 years: 200IU\*  
50 - 70 years: 400IU\*

\*Many experts, including the Canadian Cancer Society are currently recommending supplementing with 1000IU daily for adults - talk to your health care professional to learn if this is right for you.

### Bone Up! Selected Calcium Sources

• 250 ml 1% Milk	325 mg
• ¾ cup plain yogurt	300 mg
• 1 tbsp parmesan	60mg
• 250ml fortified soy milk	325 mg
• 150 g Firm Tofu	235 mg
• ¼ cup Almonds	90 mg
• ½ cup cooked Spinach	130 mg
• ½ can Sockeye Salmon with bones	420 mg
• 250 ml Calcium fortified Orange juice	350mg

### Avoid these sneaky dairy ingredients!

- Casein and Caseinates
- Whey
- Hydrolyzed Milk Protein
- Lactate or Lactose
- Lactalbumin phosphate
- Lactoferrin or Lactoglobulin
- Modified Milk Ingredients

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#### Kitsilano

2627 W. 16th Ave.  
Vancouver  
604.736.0009

#### Cambie

3493 Cambie St.  
Vancouver  
604.875.0099

#### Kerrisdale

1888 W. 57th Ave.  
Vancouver  
604.263.4600

#### Yaletown

1202 Richards St.  
Vancouver  
604.633.2392

#### Choices in the Park

6855 Station Hill Dr.  
Burnaby  
604.522.6441

#### Rice Bakery

2595 W. 16th Ave.  
Vancouver  
604.736.0301

#### South Surrey

3248 King George Hwy.  
South Surrey  
604.541.3902

#### Choices at the Crest

8683 10th Ave.,  
Burnaby  
604.522.0936

#### Kelowna

1937 Harvey Ave.  
Kelowna  
250.862.4864