

IS IT LACTOSE, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

What is lactose and lactose intolerance?

Lactose is the naturally occurring sugar found in milk. People with lactose intolerance do not produce enough lactase to adequately breakdown lactose, which can result in gastrointestinal symptoms like bloating, pain and diarrhoea after consuming milk and other lactose containing dairy products.

Even people with lactose intolerance can usually tolerate a level of lactose (around 12g per day or 1 cup of milk), as they may still produce some lactase. This may be better tolerated if spread across the day. For those who are lactase deficient, regular consumption of lactose containing foods may promote colonic adaptation. This means there may be an increase in lactose digesting bacteria in the colon, which may result in reduced intolerance symptoms.

Although it is commonly assumed that gastrointestinal symptoms experienced after consuming regular milk are due to lactose intolerance, lactose might not be the cause of some people's digestive discomfort. It's important to talk to your doctor and dietitian to help determine if you have a true lactose intolerance.

If it's not lactose causing my discomfort, then what could it be?

Milk from dairy cows contains different proteins, including casein and whey. Approximately one-third of the protein in regular cow's milk is beta-casein, of which there are two types - A1 and A2. There is a slight difference in the way the A1 and A2 beta-casein proteins are digested in the body – the A2 beta-casein protein is easier on digestion. Some studies have shown that the A1 beta-casein protein may be a contributor to gastrointestinal symptoms following milk ingestion for some people who have difficulty digesting milk.

Lactose levels in foods

Some dairy foods contain less lactose than others and may be better tolerated. For example, a serve of hard cheese or yoghurt contains less lactose than a glass of milk.

With a little planning, dairy foods can usually be included in the diet of a person with lactose intolerance. See below some common foods and their lactose content.



Challenge accepted!

Symptoms of milk intolerance, but maybe it's not lactose? The first step when trialling milk with only the A2 protein should be a dairy elimination diet to resolve symptoms. **Then, follow 4 simple steps:**

1

Start with a small portion of milk containing only the A2 protein in tea, coffee, on cereal and in recipes

DAY 1



2 tbsp

DAY 2



4 tbsp

DAY 3



1/2 cup

2

Gradually increase over a week to a full cup of milk containing only the A2 protein

DAY 4



3/4 cup

DAY 5



1 cup

3

Avoid other regular dairy foods during this reintroduction phase

4

If no symptoms arise during the reintroduction phase, milk containing only the A2 protein could be the answer

Please note this information is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, which should be tailored to your individual circumstances.

Supported by The a2 Milk Company, February 2022