

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

Lactose intolerance is an inability to digest significant amount of lactose / milk sugar, so is also termed as milk intolerance.

Mostly lactose intolerance is seen in babies, in 1st six months of their life.

CAUSES

- 1) This inability occurs due to lack or shortage of enzyme lactase, is produced in the linings of the intestine, it aids in digestion of lactose.
 - Digestive disease or injuries to the small intestine.
 - Inborn inability to produce lactate.
 - Premature births at 28-32 weeks gestation, have low levels of lactase, as lactase levels increase in fetus in the last weeks of third trimester.
 - Lactase activity is reduced in patients with Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, celiac disease, intestinal tuberculosis and intestinal cancer.
 - Lactase production can be low in alcoholics.

INCIDENCES

- a. Ethnicity - more seen in African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Jews, Native Americans and Mexicans.
- b. It is least common in northern Europeans.

DIETARY MANAGEMENT

- a. In case of infants, Mothers should stop feeding the infant as mother's milk is high in lactose. Lactose-free milk is also a great way to get calcium.
 - b. In case of severe diarrhoea, give rehydration solutions - water with salt and sugar after every stool.
 - c. If your child is dehydrated (Signs - weak cry, low activity, dry tongue) do not treat at home, rush to your physician.
 - d. Start milk again only after consulting your physician.
 - e. Do not start prepared baby formulas without consulting your physician.
 - f. Adults should avoid sweets, bakery or dairy products, they contain lactose.
 - g. It is not necessary for older children and adults to avoid foods containing lactose completely; lactose intolerance differs from individual to individual for different food and in different quantities. For e.g. some individuals can tolerate one glass of milk and not more than that, where as others may not be able to tolerate even 1/2 a glass of milk, some can eat cheddar cheese with out distress where as others get severe aggravation from cheese.
 - h. So Dietary management for lactose intolerance depends on how much lactose they can tolerate.
- 2) You can consume yogurt, though it is high in lactose, studies have shown that bacterial cultures in the yogurt, produces some lactase enzyme which helps in proper digestion of yogurt. But initially consume only 3-4 tablespoons of yogurt and if you have no symptoms you can freely consume it. It is essential as yogurt contains all the nutrients found in milk, thus prevents deficiencies that may occur due to avoiding lactose containing food (all dairy products).
 - 1) Do not consume frozen yogurt, they do not have live bacteria's.
 - 2) Check food labels for - whey, curds, casein, malted milks, butter milk, dry milk solids, milk by-products, non fat dry milk powder, lactose (lactate, lactalbumin,

lactylate and caseinate do not contain lactose.), on processed meats check for - cold cuts, sausages etc. for presence of milk solids.

- 3) Check labels of drugs before consuming as 20% of drugs contain lactose, e.g. many types of birth control pills, antacids, neomycin and colchicines.
- 4) You can consume, home made breads and pastas or pastas which do not contain milk solids, rice, barley, dried legumes and fresh potatoes, not commercially prepared ready to eat potatoes.
- 5) You can use soy milk, goat's milk, rice milk. But check labels before use.
- 6) You can use lactase enzymes available in the form of tablets and liquids, along with milk and milk products. They are available as lactaid, lacterase and dairy ease enzyme products.
- 7) If you are completely avoiding milk and milk products you can face deficiency of the nutrients available from milk - calcium, vitamin A, Vitamin D, riboflavin and phosphorus. Vitamin A, riboflavin and phosphorus can be easily obtained from other food sources; where as vitamin D is easily produced by our body on exposure to sun. But milk is main source of calcium, so avoiding dairy products will lead to calcium deficiency. Hence one should always watch their calcium intake from other food sources and increase other foods that are high in calcium.

NOTE : PLEASE CONTACT WITH YOUR DOCTOR FOR EXACT DIET FOR THE HEALTH PRBLEMS YOU HAVE.THIS A SAMPLE DIET CHART TO GET THE IDEA OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE FOOD INTAKE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE HEALTHY .