

Lactose Intolerance

Lactose intolerance means that your body can't digest or absorb the milk sugar called lactose. Milk, other milk-based dairy products (such as cheese and ice cream), and foods to which milk has been added (such as pudding) may contain lactose.

Lactose intolerance may occur after treatment with some antibiotics, with radiation to the stomach or with any treatment that affects the digestive tract. The part of your intestines that digests lactose may not work properly during treatment. For some people, the symptoms of lactose intolerance (gas, cramps, diarrhea) disappear a few weeks or months after the treatments end or when the intestine heals. For others, a permanent change in eating habits may be needed.

If you have this problem, your doctor may advise you to follow a diet that is low in foods that contain lactose. Talk to a registered dietitian to get advice and specific tips about how to follow a low-lactose diet. Your supermarket should carry milk and other products that have been modified to reduce or eliminate the lactose. You can also make your own low-lactose or lactose free foods.