

Low Lactose Diet for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Lactose is a sugar found in animal milks (including cow, sheep and goat). Some people with IBS are unable to digest and absorb this sugar, which can lead to symptoms of bloating, diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Lactose intolerance is a completely different condition to dairy allergy and this sheet is **not** suitable for those with dairy allergy.

To assess your tolerance, we recommend you follow a low lactose diet for at least 2 weeks and monitor your symptoms.

If your symptoms improve on a low lactose diet...

It indicates you may have lactose intolerance. To confirm this, after following a low lactose diet, drink a glass of regular milk. If your symptoms reoccur after doing the above on 3 separate occasions, lactose intolerance is the likely diagnosis and you should continue to follow a low lactose diet for the next 3 months, but repeat this challenge every 3 months.

If your symptoms do not improve on a low lactose diet...

It is unlikely lactose is the cause of your symptoms. Therefore, there is no need to avoid lactose and you should return to your previous diet.

Most people with lactose intolerance can tolerate small amounts of lactose in some dairy foods, especially when it is spread through-out the day. On a low lactose diet, it is important **not** to exclude all sources of dairy as they provide an important source of calcium. The information below will help you decide which foods to choose, and which to avoid on a low lactose diet.

<p>Milk</p> <p>A maximum of 50ml whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk as part of a meal/drink is usually well tolerated. If you wish to use more than 50ml milk at a time, choose a low lactose alternative from the following:</p> <p>Choose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lactose free milk ✓ Soya milk ✓ Rice milk ✓ Oat milk ✓ Nut milk ✓ Coconut milk 	<p>Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Cow/Sheep/Goat milk ✗ Buttermilk ✗ Milk Powder ✗ Evaporated milk ✗ Condensed milk ✗ Organic low lactose milk (ie: organic soya/oat/)
<p>Cheese</p> <p>Choose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hard cheese (cheddar, blue, gouda, edam, mozzarella, parmesan, feta) ✓ Soft cheese (brie, camembert, goat's cheese) <p>Maximum 2 tbsp cottage cheese, ricotta, quark</p>	<p>Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Processed cheese ✗ Cheese spread ✗ Reduced fat cheese of all types (including hard & soft reduced fat cheeses)
<p>Yoghurts/Desserts</p> <p>Choose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2 tbsp maximum of normal yoghurt ✓ Lactose free yoghurt ✓ Soya yoghurt/dessert/custard ✓ 1 scoop maximum of normal ice-cream ✓ Soya ice cream ✓ 2 tbsp maximum of normal custard 	<p>Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Low fat yoghurt ✗ Drinking yoghurt ✗ Fromage frais
<p>Others</p> <p>Choose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Butter/margarine ✓ Cream ✓ Sour cream ✓ Crème fraiche ✓ Dark chocolate ✓ 50g maximum of milk or white chocolate 	<p>Avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Low fat versions of cream of any kind. <p>Prepared Foods/Drinks & Food Labels</p> <p>Check the ingredients lists of all prepared food & drinks, and avoid any containing the following: Milk; Lactose; Whey; Curds; Milk Powder.</p>

Recommended daily intake for calcium for adults is **700mg** per day. See link: <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/calcium.html>

Item	Serving Size	Approximate Calcium Content (mg)
Milks		
Milk (Whole, Semi-Skimmed, Skimmed)	200ml	240
Lactose free milk*	200ml	240
Soya milk*	200ml	240
Rice milk*	200ml	240
Coconut milk*	200ml	240
Oat milk*	200ml	240
Nut milk*	200ml	240
Yoghurts/Desserts		
Lactose free yoghurt	125g pot	125
Soya yoghurt	100g pot	120
Soya custard	125g	150
Soya dessert	125g pot	150
Ice cream	1 scoop	70
Soya ice cream	1 scoop	6
Cheese		
Hard cheese	30g	225
Soya cheese	30g	130
Soft cheese	30g	80

* Some milks, especially organic versions, may not be fortified with calcium. Check food labels and choose milks that contain at least 120mg of calcium per 100ml of milk

Item	Serving Size	Approximate Calcium Content (mg)
Fruit, Vegetables, Nuts & Pulses		
Tahini paste	1 tbsp	150
Spinach	90g	150
Apricots, ready to eat, dried	3	50
Orange, Large	1	50
Cabbage	90g	50
Baked beans	100g	50
Sesame seeds	1 tbsp	50
Sultanas or raisins	2 tbsp	25
Broccoli, cooked	2 spears	25
Almonds or Brazil nuts	6	25
Walnuts	9	25
Kidney beans	1 tbsp	25
Fish		
2 canned pilchard	2	250
2 canned sardine	2	250
White fish poached in water	170g	25
Fish fingers	2	25
Other		
Orange juice with added calcium	200	250
White bread enriched with calcium	2 slices	100
White bread	2 slices	50
Wholemeal bread	2 slices	25
Chapatti	1	25
1 egg	1	25

Examples of Products - Supermarket own brands are available

