

DIET SHEET – Paediatric Dietetics

Low Lactose Diet

Lactose is a sugar found in animal milks (including cow, sheep and goat). Some children are unable to digest and absorb this sugar, which can lead to symptoms of bloating, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

To assess your child's tolerance, it is recommended your child follows a low lactose diet for at least 4 weeks and that you monitor their symptoms during this time.

If your child's symptoms improve on a low lactose diet...

It indicates your child may have lactose intolerance. To confirm this, after following a low lactose diet, offer your child a small glass of regular milk. If the symptoms reoccur, lactose intolerance is the likely diagnosis and your child should continue to follow a low lactose diet.

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

It is unlikely lactose is the cause of your child's symptoms. Therefore, there is no need for your child to avoid lactose and they should return to their previous diet.

Some children 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.

Milk Choose a low lactose alternative from the following:

- Choose**
- ✓ Lactose free milk¹ e.g. Lactofree (full fat)
 - ✓ Soya milk¹ e.g. Alpro Soya Growing up milk, ²supermarket branded
 - ✓ Oat milk¹ e.g. Oatly Whole, Oatly Barista, ²supermarket branded
 - ✓ Nut milks²
 - ✓ Coconut milk¹ e.g. Koko Super, ² supermarket branded
 - ✓ Rice milk² (unsuitable under 5 years of age)

- Avoid**
- ✗ Cow/Sheep/Goat milk
 - ✗ Buttermilk
 - ✗ Milk Powder
 - ✗ Evaporated milk
 - ✗ Condensed milk
 - ✗ Organic low lactose milk ((i.e.: organic soya/oat/ rice milk as they are not fortified with calcium

¹ Choose milk substitutes with more than 40kcal/100mls for children 12-18 months

² May be lower in calories and therefore may be unsuitable under 18 months of age

Cheese

- Choose**
- ✓ Hard cheese (cheddar, blue, gouda, edam, mozzarella, parmesan, feta) or lactose free cheese
 - ✓ Soft cheese (brie, camembert, goat's cheese)
 - ✓ Maximum 1 tbsp cottage cheese, ricotta, quark

- Avoid**
- ✗ Processed cheese
 - ✗ Cheese spread
 - ✗ Reduced fat cheese of all types (including hard and soft reduced fat cheeses)

Yoghurts/Desserts

- Choose**
- ✓ Soya ice cream
 - ✓ Lactose free yoghurt
 - ✓ Soya yoghurt/dessert/custard
 - ✓ Jelly

- Avoid**
- ✗ Low fat yoghurt
 - ✗ Drinking yoghurt
 - ✗ Fromage frais

Others

- Choose**
- ✓ Butter or margarine
 - ✓ Soya or sunflower spread

- Avoid**
- ✗ Low fat versions of cream of any kind.

Prepared Foods Check the ingredients lists of all prepared food and drink because milk or lactose are often hidden ingredients. Avoid any containing the following: Milk; Lactose; Whey; Curds; Milk powder.

Meeting Calcium Requirements

If you have reduced your child's intake of dairy products on a low lactose diet, it is essential they are replaced with appropriate calcium fortified alternatives.

Age range	Calcium per day (mg)
1-3 years	350
4-6 years	450
7-10 years	550
11-18 years boys	1000
11-18 years girls	800

Item	Serving Size	Approximate Calcium Content (mg)
Milks		
Lactose free milk*	200ml	240
Soya 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

Examples of Products

(Supermarket own brands are also available.)



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
Kidney beans	1 tbsp	25
Fish		
2 canned pilchards	2	250
2 canned sardines	2	250
White fish poached in water	170g	25
Fish fingers	2	25
Other		
1 egg	1	25
White bread	2 slices	50
Wholemeal bread	2 slices	25
Chapatti	1	25
White bread enriched with calcium	2 slices	100

Advice for patients
Dietetics/Mar22/review Mar25
www.somersetft.nhs.uk