



Lactose Content of Common Foods

- Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products. Many adults have trouble digesting lactose and dairy products; this is often due to low levels of the lactase enzyme needed to break down lactose in the intestine.
- Some people with lactose intolerance may be able to include dairy products in the diet by adjusting amount eaten or type
- For those who need to limit or eliminate lactose in your diet, the following information should help you identify sources of lactose in common foods and beverages.
- **Low lactose diet: < 10 grams lactose per day**
- **Lactose free diet: all sources of lactose are avoided**

Product	Serving Size	Lactose (grams)
Acidophilus Milk	1 cup	11
Butter	1 tsp	trace
Buttermilk	1 cup	10
Cheese	1 ounce	0-2
• American cheese	1 ounce	1
• Bleu cheese	1 ounce	2
• Cheddar cheese, sharp	1 ounce	0
• Parmesan cheese, grated	1 ounce	1
• Swiss cheese	1 ounce	1
Chocolate Milk	1 cup	11
Cottage cheese, creamed	½ cup	3
Cottage cheese, uncreamed	½ cup	2
Cream, light	½ cup	4
Cream cheese	1 ounce	1
Evaporated Milk	1 cup	24
Half-and-Half	½ cup	5
Ice cream	½ cup	6
Ice milk	½ cup	9
Margarine	1 tsp	trace
Milk (nonfat, 1%, 2%, whole)	1 cup	11
Nonfat Dry Milk Powder (unreconstituted)	1 cup	62
Sherbet, orange	½ cup	2
Sour Cream	½ cup	4
Sweetened Condensed Milk, undiluted	1 cup	40
Whipping Cream	½ cup	3
Yogurt, low-fat	1 cup	5

- Foods made from dairy products (such as pudding, cream soups, cream or cheese sauces, etc.) also contain lactose. The amount of lactose in a product will depend on the amount of dairy products used. Other foods such as baked items, instant mixes, salad dressings, etc. may also contain lactose. The following ingredients suggest a product contains lactose:

Butter	Dry milk solids	Milk sugar
Caseinates	Lactose	Non-fat dry milk powder
Cheese	Milk	Skim milk solids
Cream	Milk by-products	Whey
Curds	Milk solids	Yogurt

- Lactose free alternatives that are good sources of calcium and vitamin D include: 100% lactose-free milk, Vitamite® 100, Ensure®, and Boost®. Rice milk and soymilk are also lactose free alternatives; however, some brands may not contain calcium and vitamin D. Read labels carefully if you plan to use soy or rice milk as an alternate source of these nutrients.
- Lactose can also be found medications. Check for lactose on the label, although it does not have to be listed; if you are very sensitive to lactose and have persistent symptoms, ask your pharmacist to help you. Ask your doctor to prescribe a lactose-free alternative if one exists.
- If you are on a low lactose diet, discuss your calcium and vitamin D intake with your physician or nutritionist. Studies have shown that individuals with lactose intolerance often do not take in enough of these nutrients. Inadequate calcium and vitamin D intake increases the risk of osteoporosis.

Additional information can be found at the University of Virginia Health System/ Digestive Health Center of Excellence at:

- ◆ www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/digestive-health/nutrition.cfm
- ◆ Scroll down to the link for Nutrition Articles in Practical Gastroenterology
- ◆ Lactose Intolerance is the February 2003 article.