

Lactose Intolerance – What Is It?

Is it a food intolerance or a food allergy? People often confuse food allergies and food intolerances because of the similarities in symptoms. However, a food intolerance differs greatly from a food allergy. A food intolerance involves the digestive system whereas a food allergy involves the immune system. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, food intolerance is a difficulty in digesting a certain food. In most cases, a food intolerance is not life-threatening, but symptoms, such as nausea and/or diarrhea, can be uncomfortable. Symptoms may occur gradually within a few hours up to forty-eight hours after eating a food. While there are several types of food intolerances, this month’s memo will focus on lactose intolerance –the most common food intolerance.

Lactose is a sugar found in milk and other dairy products. Lactose intolerance occurs when the body does not make enough of the enzyme “lactase”. As a result, this can cause intestinal gas, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and other uncomfortable symptoms.

In the United States, an estimated 30 million adults are lactose intolerant. It is less common in children because most young children have enough lactase to digest milk. As people age, lactase levels tend to decline, often resulting in development of lactose intolerance.

At this time, there is no cure for any other food intolerance, and there is no way to prevent the development of food intolerances. The key to managing lactose and other food intolerance is to avoid the food and choose other sources for essential nutrients. The best way to avoid foods containing lactose is to read food labels for ingredients. Use the Ingredients Chart to help choose safe foods for the children in your care.

Ingredients Chart	
Ingredients to Avoid	Ingredients to Use
Milk	Lactylate
Whey	Lactase
Lactose	Lactalbumin
Curd	Calcium compounds
Caseinate	
Skim milk powder	
Skim milk solids	

Tips for Managing Food Intolerance

- TIP #1:** Work closely with parents to ensure the safety of children with food intolerances.
- TIP #2:** Have a medical statement and/or care plan on file for a child who has a food intolerance as outlined by your local or state regulations.
- TIP #3:** Check with your state agency or sponsoring organization about the right documentation for managing food intolerance.
- TIP #4:** Create a method for easily identifying children who have food intolerance(s). Remember, this information is confidential and should be shared only with child care staff.
- TIP #5:** Read food labels for products that may contain lactose.

Remember, just as with food allergies, the best method for preventing a reaction is to avoid the problem food.

Vegetable of the Month

It's Vegetable Time! The vegetable of the month is spinach. Spinach was first discovered around 650 AD in the Middle East and later found in the United States in the early 1700's. California and Texas are among the top spinach-producing states. There are three types of spinach: flat, savoy, and semi-savoy. Spinach grows best in cool weather and planted in rich, moist soil. Spinach is filled with essential nutrients, such as vitamin A and K. Introduce spinach to children through educational activities, by planting it in buckets, reading stories about spinach, and adding it to the menu.



Nutrition Fact of the Month

When shopping, do you ever notice terms such as “high in” or “good source of”? The US Food and Drug Administration set strict guidelines to help you find foods rich in nutrients. Some useful terms listed on food packages include:

- “high fiber” – has 5 or more grams of fiber per serving,
- “good source of” – provides a minimum of 10% of the daily value of the specific nutrient per serving, and
- “high in” – provides 20% or more of the daily value of the specific nutrient per serving.



Nutrition Tip of the Month

Are you looking for a fun and tasty snack to try? Serve yogurt cones! Buy low-fat yogurt, fruit, granola, and ice cream cones. For children who may be lactose intolerant, choose lactose-free yogurt. Fill the cones with yogurt and decorate with small pieces of fruit and granola. Serve with spoons for everyone to enjoy.

Sources

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CACFP Rock Star of the Month

The CACFP Rock Star of the Month is Cecilia Bras, a licensed family child care provider from Maui, HI. In addition to serving healthy and diverse meals, Ms. Bras incorporated the Hawaiian language in her daily curriculum. She goes the extra mile by teaching the children and their parents the Hawaiian language. Due to limited resources in Hawaii, Ms. Bras special orders items to incorporate physical activity, nutrition education activities, and creative play in her child care program. Ms. Bras is very active in the CACFP by regularly participating in trainings, asking hard questions, providing input, and suggesting improvements to the program for all providers in Hawaii.

Congratulations, Ms. Bras! You are indeed a CACFP Rock Star.

It's News Time

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) will host their Annual Conference and Expo in Washington, DC. The conference will be held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center on November 20-23, 2013. This year's theme is "Imagine, Innovate, Inspire." NFSMI will present the *Basics of Good Nutrition, What Is It?* For more information on registering for this conference and attending sessions, check out NAEYC's website at <http://www.naeyc.org/conference/>