

## **LACTOSE INTOLERANCE**

**LACTOSE INTOLERANCE** is the inability of the small intestine to digest the milk sugar, lact<u>ose</u>, due to the lack of the enzyme, lact<u>ase</u>. This is NOT a milk allergy; rather it is a digestive intolerance. This is a very common problem. If lactose proceeds undigested through the gastrointestinal tract it leads to abdominal bloating, gas, abdominal pain, and/or diarrhea.

**Primary Intolerance**: The permanent, inherited inability of the small intestine to produce some or any lactase enzyme.

<u>Secondary Intolerance</u>: The short-term inability to produce lactase. This is common during and after viral intestinal infections and can last days to months. Eventually, the small intestine recovers the ability to produce lactase.

## WHAT TO DO...

1. **AVOID** consuming foods which contain lactose - milk, cheese, ice cream. (yogurt is NOT a problem because the active bacterial cultures digest the lactose)

## OR

Take lactase enzyme supplements before or during consumption of these products. Lactase is available in drops and tablets from your pharmacy without a prescription. The amount of lactase needed is variable from one person to the next and needs to be adjusted as needed. It is safe at any age.

- 2. Lactose-free and lactose-reduced dairy products are readily available at grocery stores. (Brand names = Lactaid; Dairy Ease)
- 3. Soy based products (milk, cheese, frozen creams) are also alternatives. (Brand names = White Wave, Eden Soy, Vita soy, etc.)

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