



Milk Upsets My Stomach



If drinking milk or eating foods made from milk, like cheese, yogurt, or ice cream, upsets your stomach then you may be lactose intolerant.

How many people have trouble drinking milk?

- 25% of all Americans
- 15% of White Americans
- 70% of African Americans
- 74% of Native Americans
- 53% of Mexican Americans
- 90% of Asian Americans

Why does milk or food made from milk upset my stomach?

Milk and food made from milk contain a sugar called lactose (milk sugar). Our bodies have an enzyme, lactase, that breaks down milk sugar so it can be absorbed. Some people make too little lactase. Their bodies cannot break down the sugar in milk all the way. If this is the case, then a person may have:

- Gas
- Bloating (swollen stomach)
- Diarrhea

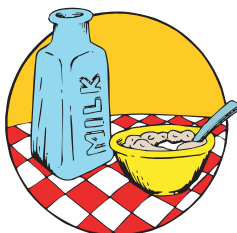


As you age your body may make less lactase. If this happens, your stomach may feel upset after drinking milk or eating food made from milk.

Can I still drink milk even if it upsets my stomach?



YES! Even if milk upsets your stomach, most people can drink 1 cup a day with a meal and not feel sick. Drinking 1 to 2 cups of milk each day can help your body make more lactase to break down the sugar (lactose) in milk.



Tip: Start with low-fat milk on your cereal!

What can I do if I want to drink milk and eat foods made from or with milk?

- Start by drinking small amounts of milk and eating small portions of foods made from milk
- Read the food label and:
 1. Drink lactose-reduced milk.
 2. Eat lactose-reduced cheeses and ice cream.
- Take a lactase pill (Lactaid®, Dairy Ease®) before drinking milk or eating foods made from milk.
- Eat yogurt.
- Eat hard cheeses like Parmesan & Romano.



How do I know if I am lactose intolerant?

Your doctor can run tests to see if you are lactose intolerant.

What should I watch out for if I am lactose intolerant?

Other foods have small amounts of milk or lactose and include:

- Breads, cereal
- Lunch meats
- Creamy salad dressings
- Boxed cookie and cake mixes
- Frozen meals and desserts
- Nondairy coffee creamers

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TIP: Read the food label. It lists all the ingredients in a food product.

What about Calcium?

Drinking milk and eating food made from milk, like cheese and yogurt, each day are great ways to get the calcium your body needs. If drinking milk or eating food made from milk upsets your stomach, get your daily calcium from:

- Lactose reduced foods
- Juices, cereals and breads with added calcium
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Soy foods like tofu with calcium
- A handful of almonds
- Blackstrap molasses (try mixing it in your morning oatmeal!)

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