

Health & Science



What is lactose intolerance?

Lactose intolerance is a set of symptoms resulting from the body's inability to digest the milk sugar called lactose.

Lactose is commonly found in dairy-based foods and beverages, and is digested in the intestines by the enzyme lactase.

Lactase breaks down lactose so it can be absorbed into the bloodstream.

When the body does not produce enough lactase, lactose cannot be digested which may result in lactose intolerance. Individuals may have varying degrees of intolerance to lactose.

If you are lactose intolerant, you share this condition with many people. It is estimated that 90 percent of

Asian-Americans are lactose intolerant and 75 percent of all African and Native Americans, Jew, and Hispanics in the U.S. Have insufficient levels of the lactase enzyme and may experience some or all symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

Depending on the individual, the symptoms may vary, including cramps, bloating, gas, diarrhea, and nausea.

If you experience these symptoms after eating dairy products, talk with a registered dietitian or physician for an accurate evaluation and appropriate management.

How can I manage lactose intolerance?

Lactose intolerance can be easily

managed. Because some individuals may produce small amounts of lactase, they may be able to consume small servings of dairy products or other foods that contain lactose without experiencing discomfort.

A larger amount of lactose is needed to digest a larger amount of lactose, so eating a larger serving of lactose-containing food could result in the symptoms of lactose intolerance.

In such cases, a registered dietitian can plan helpful strategies to manage lactose intolerance.

Consider the following suggestions:

- Drink milk in servings of one cup or less.

- Try hard cheeses that are low in lactose, like cheddar.

- Drink milk with a meal or with other foods.

- Try yogurt with active cultures.
- Substitute lactose-reduced dairy products, such as nonfat, low-fat, and calcium-fortified milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, and ice cream, for regular dairy products.

- Take lactose enzyme tablets before eating or with dairy products.

- Add lactase enzyme drops to regular milk.

Does lactose-reduced milk contain the same nutrients as regular milk?

Lactose-reduced milk contains the same amounts of protein, vitamins

A, D, and riboflavin, and the minerals calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium as regular milk.

Some lactose-reduced milk is also calcium-fortified. Check the Nutrition Facts label for the amounts of nutrients in milk.

Dairy products are a significant source of calcium and other minerals needed for healthy bones and teeth.

Two to three servings from the milk, yogurt, and cheese group help provide the calcium and other minerals you need each day.

What foods contain calcium?

Many foods contain calcium, such as broccoli, kale, canned salmon with bones, calcium-fortified breads, and

tofu. Read the Nutrition Facts label for the amounts of calcium in these foods.

A healthy, well-balanced eating pattern includes foods from all food groups: bread, cereal, rice, pasta, fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans, nuts, milk, yogurt, and cheese.

For more information: The American Dietetic Association/National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics

For answers to your nutrition questions or for a referral to a registered dietitian in your area, call the Consumer Nutrition Hot Line at 800/366-1655.

Supplementing not always beneficial

More is not always better, especially when it comes to supplementing children's diets with vitamins.

Over-the-counter supplements can be potentially toxic and megadoses can be harmful, warns Dr. Kathleen J. Motil at the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center.

"Too much iron can be fatal, and there are cases where excess vitamin A and D can damage the kidneys, heart, and brain," said Motil, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine.

Vitamins are available in two forms: fat soluble and water soluble. Fat soluble vitamins include A, D, E,

and K. Water solubles include B-1, B-2, niacin, B-6, B-12, and vitamin C.

Water soluble vitamins are easily absorbed by the intestinal tract and flushed out of the body during urination if not needed, Motil explained.

Fat solubles, on the other hand, are more difficult to absorb and tend to be stored in the body.

"The fat soluble vitamins are the worry," Motil said.

"Retractions vary from person to person. Some people are more sensitive to fat soluble vitamins."

In general, Motil believes that vitamins are unnecessary if a child is

healthy and consumes a well-balanced diet.

She suggests the USDA's food guide pyramid as a reference. The pyramid recommends 2 to 3 servings a day from the milk group, 2 to 3 servings of meat, poultry, fish or eggs, 3 to 5 servings of vegetables, 2 to 4 servings of fruit, and 6 to 11 servings from the bread/cereal group.

"Even the most finicky eater will get enough vitamins and minerals with a varied diet including meat, dairy products, grains and fruits and vegetables."

There are exceptions, however. Motil believes supplements are ap-

propriate for premature infants, children or restrictive diets including vegetarian diets, and for children under the care of a physician for specific medical reasons such as a chronic illness, teen pregnancy, or eating disorders.

A pediatrician may also recommend a fluoride supplement, available alone and in combination with vitamins, if there is insufficient fluoride in the drinking water.

Motil urges parents to consult their pediatrician or a registered dietitian who specializes in children's nutrition if they are concerned about their child's eating habits.

Support AIDs patients

Join other compassionate people in your community by volunteering your time to support someone nearby who is living with AIDs.

Supporting someone could mean anything from helping with shopping and cooking to holding hands and listening.

There will be a training in McMinnville for all interested peo-

ple on October 26 and 27.

We will enhance skills that we already have, learn more about AIDs and caregiver safety, and have a lot of fun doing it.

To learn more call Grace Taylor at Cascade AIDs Project in Portland, 503-223-5907, or Norm Costa at the Health Department in Yamhill County, 503-434-7525.

Free Eye Screenings

In recognition of November as National Diabetes Month, the Pacific University College of Optometry Vision Centers and the American Diabetes Association -- Oregon Affiliate are offering a program of free eye health screenings for people with diabetes.

The free screenings will be available for people with diabetes of all ages from mid October to mid December.

Screenings will be sponsored by and provided at the Pacific University Vision Centers and affiliate vision clinics in downtown Portland, Forest Grove, Southeast Portland, Cornelius, and McMinnville.

Diabetes mellitus is the leading cause of legal blindness in America today affecting people between the ages of 20 and 75 affecting 16 million Americans and approximately 150,000 Oregonians.

Diabetes mellitus is also a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in our nation.

Statistics from the American

Optometric Association indicate that approximately one third of those with diabetes have never had a comprehensive vision evaluation.

"Even more alarming is the fact that more than one third of people suffering from diabetes who are considered to be at highest risk for vision loss have never received an eye exam," says Leland Carr, O.D., Professor of Optometry and Associate Dean for Clinical Programs at Pacific's College of Optometry.

According to Dr. Carr, findings reveal that more than 60 percent of the people in this high risk group will suffer from serious eye disorders such as diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, glaucoma, and other eye conditions that are made worse by diabetes.

For more information and to schedule a free-eye health screening for those with diabetes, please contact Pacific University's Portland Vision Center, (503) 224-2323 or Forest Grove Vision Center, (503) 357-5800.

Inner cities needs health providers

Dr. Sullivan recently visited Oakland Tech High School to encourage students to pursue careers as primary care physicians in inner city and rural areas.

Dr. Sullivan met with students in the school physiology laboratory. Dr. Sullivan held a brief question and answer session with students to discuss the benefits of taking individual and community responsibility for health care.

Sullivan is furthering MSM's mission to train and graduate minority physicians to practice primary care in urban and other underserved areas. While in the Bay area, Dr. Sullivan also met with key corporate leaders in MSM's \$30 million national fundraising campaign. The medical school leads the nation in the percent of its graduates who enter primary care.

Louis W. Sullivan is an M.D., and the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and president of the Morehouse School of Medicine.

Local Pediatric asthma soars

The study, Insight, Insight into Asthma Prevalence in Oregon (ALAO) at a press conference held at Woodlawn Elementary School yesterday.

The study, Insight into Asthma Prevalence in Oregon reveals that the number of Oregon children with asthma actually increases from elementary school through high school.

Asthma is a serious lung disease with deadly potential. Children with asthma have trouble moving air in and out of their lungs. Their airways sometimes swell and the muscles around the airways tighten.

"To truly help those with asthma we have to throw false assumptions about the disease and its causes out the window," says Shane McDermott, Executive Director for the ALAO. "This study demonstrates the need for increased asthma monitoring and education to truly eliminate unnecessary expense, suffering and death."

Their review of data involving 85,533 school students from Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Portland, Reynolds and Sauvie Island school districts found average reported current asthma of 5.9%. One particularly noteworthy

find was that asthma prevalence rate among children tends to increase from elementary school (5.2%) to middle school (6.1%) to high school (6.8%).

It appears that a conservative estimate of current asthma prevalence is about 6% for school-aged children.

"There's a message here for parents that asthma should not be treated as a temporary problem to be weathered until a child outgrows it," says Stephen A. Tilles, M.D., Assistant Professor of Medicine & Director of the Allergy and Asthma Clinic at the Oregon Health Sciences University, and a member of the ALAO Board of Directors.

"Asthma can easily be a lifetime condition, and the long term outcome may be improved with early intervention."

"Study data also confirms that Oregon's asthma death rate has been almost twice as high as the national average--2.6 deaths per 10,000 population," says study co-author Marla London.

"It is unclear whether there is actually a higher asthma death rate in Oregon or whether the rate is attributable to Oregon's policies on accurate reporting on death certificates.

This demonstration an imminent need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of asthma impact in Oregon," she added.

Asthma is costly. It is estimated that the direct and indirect costs of asthma in the U.S. is \$6.2 billion or 1% of total health care costs.

The cost of treating asthma in children alone amount to more than \$1.35 billion every year. If asthma is indicative of the prevalence of chronic illnesses in school-aged children, the burden of providing healthcare for school children with asthma and other chronic condition is extremely high.

Among chronic diseases, asthma ranks first in the number of children affected, first in making kids miss school, and first in sending them to the hospital. Each year, children with asthma miss twice as many school days as kids without asthma.

The American Lung Association of Oregon along with volunteers from across the state is working to stop the rising number of school absences, hospitalizations and asthma-related deaths through its Open Airways for Schools (OAS) asthma intervention program.

Study links prozac to minor birth abnormalities

The company that used its cereal boxes to educate the public about the link between fiber and cancer prevention is now addressing an often overlooked yet very significant family issue: breakfast.

In support of a new initiative spearheaded by the American Health Foundation (AHF) and supported by 18 other national health, nutrition and educational organizations, Kellogg Company (NYSE: K) is taking out a full-page advertisement in USA Today to encourage Americans to "eat together ... talk together ... and hug one another" at breakfast. The ad is specifically designed to create nationwide awareness and participation in a new observance -- Take Time Out for a Healthy Breakfast Day -- on Monday, Oct. 7 when health and education authorities are

encouraging parents and children to eat breakfast together as a way of strengthening family bonds.

"At a time when Americans want to spend more time together as families, we want parents to know that breakfast matters beyond just consuming food," said Ernst Wynder, MD, president, American Health Foundation. "Not only does breakfast offer important health benefits but it is a forum for reconnecting and teaching family values."

Kellogg's advertising message is supported by health experts who have documented a strong relationship between family eating and those experiences that are involved in the nurturing process.

Recognizing the shift in time availability for many working parents, the campaign encourages breakfast as

the new family meal time since dinner has given way to long work hours and busy after-school schedules. Besides taking less time to eat than other meals, studies show that eating breakfast is an indicator of overall good health habits. It is a simple first step to improved nutrition and performance, especially for children.

"Now that experts have made a compelling case for families having breakfast together, we want Americans to understand that the old adage is true: breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Through Kellogg's advertising support, we hope to get this message across," Dr. Wynder said.

The "Take Time Out for a Healthy Breakfast Day" observance on Oct. 7 is supported by the following national medical, nutrition and education organizations.

Speak to Your Brothers

This past spring marked the end of a five-year survey of over 1200 gay men in Portland.

Dr. Colleen Hoff, PhD from the Center For AIDs Prevention Studies will participate in a community fo-

rum where she will present some of the findings, answer questions and take part in an open discussion about the gay men's community: who we are, how we live and how we love.

This community forum will be held at 7 pm Wednesday, October 30 in the Metro Council Chambers, Third Floor, 600 N.E. Grand.

For further information contact Doug at 223-5907 ext. 145.

Moderate influenza season

Experts are predicting a moderate 1996-97 influenza season, but people most at risk for life-threatening flu complications should still get vaccinated -- and the sooner the better.

"The elderly and people with chronic underlying health problems should get vaccinated every flu season," said Dr. W. Paul Glezen, epidemiologist at the Influenza Research Center at Houston's Baylor College of Medicine.

Influenza B will likely be the dominant strain this season, Glezen said, but there could also be an appearance by A/Wuhan (H3N2), a new variant.

Glezen advises people in the high-risk groups to get inoculated as soon as the vaccine becomes available, usually in early autumn.

In North America, flu season usually begins in earnest after Thanksgiving, but, as happened in 1991, it can come earlier.

"If it hits early, the elderly and people with chronic underlying health problems need to be protected," Glezen said.

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