

Lactose Avoidance Trial

Your doctor is attempting to determine if some of your symptoms might be due to intolerance of lactose (milk sugar). This is not a milk allergy (which is related to a reaction to the milk protein), but an acquired difficulty in digesting milk sugar. Your ability to handle a lactose load diminishes slowly as you age. This is a normal process. Minor illness such as a gastrointestinal virus or treatment with antibiotics might temporarily alter your ability to handle lactose. Even though you might have made no changes to your diet, your “usual” lactose load might become too much for the body to handle.

Steps to follow:

1. For a period of not less than five days, eliminate all milk products from your diet. This includes such things as milk drinking, milk in cereal, cheeses, ice cream, frozen yogurt, chocolate , and anything else containing milk.
2. Keep track of your symptoms during this period to see if there is an appreciable effect on them. If other “anti-gas” medications have been recommended (such as simethicone), don’t take them until after you have completed this lactose avoidance trial. Let the doctor know what happened at your next meeting.
3. If eliminating lactose from the diet helped you, there is most likely an element of lactose intolerance causing your symptoms. In other words, you are lactose intolerant. You should now begin to use lactose-reduced products such as Lactaid Dairyease. Lactose-reduced milk is available as are pills and drops (the drops must be added 24 hours prior to consumption of milk). Be sure to get one of the publications in our office on lactose intolerance.



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