



Emma's Guide to Dairy Free Eating

The aim of the dairy free diet is to eliminate major and minor sources of dairy foods and their derivatives in order to prevent symptoms of the food intolerance or allergy from occurring.

Lactose intolerance is a term for people who have difficulties digesting lactose, a sugar found naturally in milk. You can be either deficient or low in the enzyme called lactase, which is the enzyme responsible for breaking down lactose in the small intestine. Symptoms of Lactose intolerance are caused by undigested lactose in the large intestine, where the lactose ferments. Symptoms include:

- Intestinal cramping
- Abdominal bloating and pain
- Diarrhea and/or constipation
- Gas and flatulence
- Nausea

Label reading is a must as lactose is found in many products under names such as non-fat milk products, milk solids, whey, yoghurt, cream, skim milk powder, cream, cheese, margarine and butter. Lactose free milk is now available in most health food stores. It is made by Parmalat and is called Zymil lactose free milk.

Other people may have a **milk allergy**, specifically an allergy to casein. Casein represents 85% of the protein portion of milk while whey makes up most of the remaining 15%. Casein has various forms depending upon the genetics of the cow that produced it. The form Beta casein A2 is well tolerated by many people whilst beta casein A1 has been linked to allergies. Beta casein A2 milk is available in health food stores now. Many individuals with a milk allergy can have small amounts of milk with beta casein A2. Check for the logo shown here to ensure you are buying the correctly produced A2 milk.

Calcium

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body and while milk and other dairy products are great sources of calcium, it is possible to obtain adequate daily calcium from other foods. These are:

- Nuts and seeds, specifically sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, Brazil nuts and hazelnuts
- Green leafy vegetables, specifically parsley, rocket, watercress, spinach, broccoli and Chinese greens
- Fish, specifically with edible bones such as sardines, whitebait, herring and salmon



- Soy, specifically soy beans, tofu and miso soup. Always buy calcium enriched soy milk
- Fruits, specifically dried figs

Other factors that affect calcium absorption must be addressed as well:

- Caffeine, alcohol and smoking increase the loss of calcium in urine
- Regular weight bearing exercise improves the uptake of calcium into the bones
- Sunlight exposure increases Vitamin D levels which helps the body absorb and retain calcium