

As a parent,  
you worry.  
About everything.  
But, one thing you  
probably don't have to  
worry about, is lactose  
intolerance and your child.

Lactose intolerance is less common in  
young children than in adults, even  
in minority populations. And, studies  
have shown that people who have  
trouble digesting lactose can still  
keep dairy foods in their diet.\*

### So, what is lactose intolerance?

Lactose intolerance is one type of food  
sensitivity. People who are lactose  
intolerant don't have enough *lactase*,  
the enzyme that breaks down lactose. Lactose is the sugar found  
in milk. Symptoms of intolerance may  
include gas, bloating, stomach cramps  
and diarrhea.

### Is lactose intolerance a childhood thing?

Not really,  
although lactase  
levels may begin to  
decline in some  
children by age 3-5.  
This decline  
is genetically  
determined.

Most children  
with lactase  
deficiency do not  
experience symptoms  
until late-adolescence or  
adulthood. If your young child is  
experiencing symptoms, there may  
be an underlying medical cause,  
so check with a doctor.

### What do I do about it?

First, if you *suspect* your child has  
lactose intolerance, discuss it with their  
doctor. Second, if the diagnosis is lactose  
intolerance, relax. Your child will probably  
still be able to consume milk products, which  
are important for good health. They contain essential nutrients  
including calcium, vitamin D and protein for bone health  
and overall growth. Milk products are the preferred source of  
calcium; supplements and calcium-fortified foods don't supply  
the complete nutrient package of milk.

# LACTOSE INTOLERANCE AND YOUR CHILD

## Can I make living with lactose intolerance easier for my child?

You bet! To find out how, check out the tips below!

■ **Team up!** Research shows that individuals with lactose  
intolerance can usually drink milk, they just have to drink smaller  
amounts at a time and with other foods. Solid foods slow down  
digestion which helps children handle lactose better.  
So, serve milk with meals. And even with  
snacks — try the classic combinations  
of milk and cereal, or milk and cookies.

### ■ Cheese (and calcium) please!

Most cheeses contain only small amounts of lactose.  
Aged hard cheeses like Cheddar, Colby, Swiss and  
Parmesan are particularly low in  
lactose and are easy to  
digest. They're tasty too,  
so that should make  
your child happy!

■ **Yummy options!** Many people find  
that chocolate milk is easier to digest  
than white milk and it has the same  
nutrients as white milk. Plus,  
yogurts with live active cultures  
contain "friendly" bacteria that help the  
body digest lactose.

### ■ You've got friends in the right place!

There's help right at your child's school...  
in the cafeteria! The cafeteria is a great  
place to implement many of the dietary  
strategies mentioned above. Milk is offered  
with meals and cheese is included on  
many menu items. Plus, they serve  
chocolate milk and yogurt and  
may even provide lactose-free milk  
for your child! The school cafeteria will  
also work with you on special diet requests — you just need  
to provide a signed note from a parent or guardian.

