

In a world where milkshakes are part of most breakfasts, chocolates are part of every celebration and ice-cream the ideal dessert at social dinners, life can be really challenging for someone with lactose intolerance. The deficiency of lactase produced in the small intestine that helps digest the milk sugar [lactose] is to be blamed for it. Since the body can't digest lactose, consuming foods with milk leads to abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhoea, gas, flatulence or nausea—within 30 minutes to hours of consuming the product.

Since lactose helps the body absorb calcium from the milk, lactose intolerant people need to pay special attention to meeting their body's calcium needs. They should consume lots of green leafy vegetables, broccoli, yoghurt, oranges, tuna and sardines and opt for lactose-free milk or soy milk to fulfil their calcium needs. They should consult a doctor about the need to consume supplements.

If you are intolerant to lactose, you need not worry about losing out on the benefits of milk and milk products. There's a way of managing your diet with this condition and still have balanced nutrition...

■ You don't have to completely cut out milk from your diet. You can occasionally consume small quantities of milk

Dairy dilemma

Milk doesn't suit your body? Here's how you can adjust your diet around it

■ By Kajal Thosani

rather than large amounts at one time. Try having curd/buttermilk in small quantities—usually most people can digest these without much problem.

■ Just because you are averse to milk doesn't mean you will have the same reaction to all milk products. According to a Mayo Clinic article on the topic, some people are able to digest certain dairy products. So if you consume dairy products, have them with meals rather than between meals.

Read labels

There are many food products in the market made using milk or milk products. So, make sure you read the food labels properly. If you are severely lactose intolerant, check for milk, lac-

tose, whey, curd, milk powder among ingredients.

Food products that may contain high amounts of lactose are pancakes, biscuits, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, protein powders, nutri bars and whipped cream.

Know this

Lactose contains galactose that some babies are unable to digest. If such babies are fed an infant formula containing lactose, the galactose accumulates in the blood causing vomiting, weight loss or jaundice. If untreated, it may even result in permanent disability such as mental retardation, cataracts or death. To avoid this, do not feed babies a formula without consulting a paediatrician.

Stay Well

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