



THE PATH
TO GREATER
VITALITY AND
HEALTH

LACTOSE MALABSORPTION

In the case of lactose malabsorption, the activity of the enzyme lactase, which degrades the milk sugar lactose, is reduced. The lactose ingested with food can therefore only be partially or not at all degraded by the lactase in the small intestine. The lactose remaining in the intestine is then available to the microorganisms living there and is utilized by them to form gases and short-chain fatty acids. This results in flatulence, abdominal pain and sometimes diarrhoea. Since most affected persons tolerate a limited amount of lactose, it makes sense to determine the individual tolerance threshold. This means that a permanent diet with a certain amount of dairy products is often possible. Only in the congenital form of lactose intolerance must lactose be completely avoided for life. In Germany, the prevalence of lactase deficiency is between 7 - 22% [1,2].

Attention

lactose intolerance \neq
lactose malabsorption

lactose malabsorption =
reduced enzyme activity

lactose intolerance = genetic
defect or lack of the enzyme

If lactose malabsorption has been diagnosed, the ideal strategy is to proceed in three stages:

1. Eliminate phase

- Achieve a symptom-free status
- Duration: about 2 weeks
- Avoid lactose as far as possible
 - Avoid normal dairy products
 - Only use lactose-free products

2. Test phase

Determination of the individual tolerance threshold

- Duration: 6-8 weeks
- Once the symptoms have subsided, foods with a low lactose content can be slowly reintroduced
- Divide the amount into 2-3 portions a day, in combination with a meal (e.g. jacket potato and curd)

3. Individualised permanent diet

- You know your tolerance threshold and can move on to your individualised permanent diet

A food and symptom diary should already be kept in the first phase.



Most dairy products are now available in lactose-free form in many supermarkets. These include:

- Milk
- Yoghurt
- Cream
- Curd
- Butter
- Cheese

Basically lactose-free in unprocessed form:

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Cereals
- Meat
- Fish

All vegan products are also suitable. Among them

- Almond, oat, rice, soy drink
- Soy and oat yoghurts
- Spreads and cold cuts
- Vegan processed products

Generally, small amounts of lactose are tolerated throughout the day.

Processed products may contain lactose. So always take a look at the ingredients list!

LOW LACTOSE CONTENT 	MEDIUM LACTOSE CONTENT	HIGH LACTOSE CONTENT 
Butter Camembert Hard cheese Mozzarella Gouda Dark chocolate	Cream cheese, Curd, yoghurt Buttermilk Whipped cream Sour cream	Milk Condensed milk Ice cream Milk chocolate

The table only contains examples of foods and does not represent a complete list.

Notes:

Lactose is hidden in many medicines, but usually in very small quantities. If you consume something while out and cannot get precise information about its lactose content, keep a lactase supplement on hand.

Supporting the therapy with probiotics is generally sensible. Feel free to try this during the test phase.

This recommendation does not consider any other intolerances or allergies. It also does not claim to be exhaustive and serves only as an initial guide. It does not replace the advice of a professional nutritionist.

Sources:

[1] Magistro M. (2022). Food intolerances - „when food makes you ill“. Current Nutritional Medicine, 47, 390-410.
 [2] Fassio F. et al (2018). Lactose Maldigestion, Malabsorption, and Intolerance: A Comprehensive Review with a Focus on Current Management and Future Perspectives. Nutrients, 10, 1599.

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