



# Fall in love with dairy again!

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Valentine's Day and American Heart Month may be on your mind this February, but Lactose Intolerance Month is also on the calendar. Do you love the taste of dairy foods, but occasionally feel discomfort after eating them? Lactose intolerance is a type of food sensitivity, not an allergy or disease. The condition arises from not having enough lactase or the enzyme that digests lactose, which is the natural sugar in milk and dairy foods. "Health experts note that because dairy foods provide many nutrients needed for a healthy diet, you should not give up dairy altogether," states Erin McGraw, Registered Dietitian with St Louis District Dairy Council. For those with lactose intolerance, there are a variety of ways to enjoy the recommended 3 servings of dairy every day without the discomfort.

### **Mix It In**

Start with a small amount of milk daily and increase gradually until you find the amount that works with your tolerance level. Solid foods help slow digestion and allow the body more time to process lactose. Drink milk with meals, blend it with frozen fruit in a smoothie or add it to hot or cold cereal for a protein-packed breakfast.

### **Layer It On**

Natural cheeses contain minimal amounts (less than 1 gram) of lactose, due to the steps in the cheese-making process, along with natural aging. Top sandwiches or whole-grain crackers with slices of Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Gouda, Provolone, or Swiss. "Cheese pairs well with all food groups, and a 1 ½ ounce serving provides 30% of your daily calcium needs," states McGraw.

### **Spoon It Up**

While yogurt contains lactose, it also has live and active cultures. This unique feature helps break down the lactose; making it easier to tolerate. Greek yogurt contains less lactose than traditional yogurt, due to the straining process used to create a thick texture. It also contains live and active cultures, helping to digest lactose. Try topping either type of yogurt with fresh fruit and a handful of granola for a tasty breakfast, snack or dessert.

### **Try It Out**

Lactose-free products such as milk, yogurt, and ice cream are available in many local retail stores. These products contain the same nutrients found in conventional dairy products, like calcium, potassium and vitamin D, and have a great flavor- all without the lactose. Substitute lactose-free products in favorite recipes and at the dinner table.

Also, keep in mind that over-the-counter lactase supplements can be taken before enjoying dairy foods to eliminate the symptoms of lactose intolerance. Be sure to speak with a physician regarding any questions or for a specific diagnosis of lactose intolerance.

To download a tip sheet on Lactose Intolerance, head over to the RESOURCES section at [www.stldairycouncil.org](http://www.stldairycouncil.org). For more information on the health benefits of dairy, visit or contact Erin McGraw with the St. Louis District Dairy Council: call (314)-835-9668, or e-mail [emcgraw@stldairycouncil.org](mailto:emcgraw@stldairycouncil.org). In addition, check us out on Facebook or Instagram at STLDairyCouncil.

### **Cinnamon Roll Smoothie**

Mix up this tasty smoothie for a quick and filling breakfast that everyone in your family will enjoy!

Serves 2

#### **Ingredients:**

1 cup low-fat milk, lactose-free  
1/2 cup yogurt, lactose-free  
1/4 cup old fashioned oats  
1/2 Tablespoon brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 frozen banana (or fresh banana, but add in 3-4 ice cubes)

#### **Directions:**

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

**Nutrition Information:** 240 Calories, 4 gm fat, 9 gm protein, 20% DV Calcium

### **Creamy Tomato-Basil Soup**

Pair this soup with a grilled cheese sandwich for a meal that will leave you feeling warm and comfortable on a cold winter's night.

Servings: 2

#### **Ingredients:**

1 medium onion, chopped  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 (16-oz.) can of tomatoes (drained)  
1 pinch ground red pepper  
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil  
2 cups milk, lactose-free  
Salt to taste  
Fresh basil leaves for garnish, optional

**Directions:**

In a medium saucepan, cook onion in olive oil over medium heat, stirring frequently until golden brown or about 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute longer. Add tomatoes and cook uncovered over medium heat for 10 minutes. Spoon  $\frac{3}{4}$  of mixture into food processor or blender container; puree until smooth.

Return puree to saucepan. Add red pepper, basil, and milk to the soup. Heat until hot but do not boil. Season to taste with salt. Divide soup into two bowls and serve. Garnish with fresh basil leaves, if desired.