

## **DAIRY PRODUCTS and YOU:**

### **LACTOSE INTOLERANCE**

Fifty million American adults are lactose intolerant. Certain ethnic and racial populations are more widely affected than others. As many as 75 percent of all African-Americans, Jewish, Native American and Mexican - American adults, and 90 percent of Asian-American adults are lactose intolerant. The condition is least common among persons of Northern European descent.

#### **What is lactose intolerance?**

Lactose intolerance is a set of symptoms resulting from the body's inability to digest the milk sugar called lactose. Lactose is commonly found in dairy-based foods and beverages, and is digested in the intestines by the enzyme lactase. Lactase breaks down lactose so it can be absorbed into the bloodstream. When the body does not produce enough lactase, lactose cannot be digested which may result in varying degrees of lactose intolerance.

#### **How can I manage lactose intolerance?**

Lactose intolerance can be easily managed. Because some individuals may produce small amounts of lactase, they may be able to consume small servings of dairy products or other foods that contain lactose without experiencing discomfort. A larger amount of lactase is needed to digest a larger amount of lactose, so eating a larger serving of lactose-containing foods could result in the symptoms of lactose intolerance.

Consider the following suggestions:

- ☼ Try an assortment of dairy products. Not all dairy products have the same amount of lactose in them. If you can tolerate some milk, drink it with meals or snacks. Consume 8 oz. or less.
- ☼ You can purchase lactose-reduced or lactose-free products at your store. They will contain all the nutrients found in their

lactose counterpart.

- ☼ Take lactase enzyme tablets before eating or with dairy products.
- ☼ Add lactase enzyme drops to regular milk.

#### **What are the Hidden Sources of Lactose?**

The ingredient list on food packages informs you of lactose or lactose-containing ingredients in the food. A good idea is to always read food labels.

- ☼ You should look for words such as "whey", "lactose", "nonfat milk solids", "buttermilk", "malted milk", "margarine", and "sweet" or "sour cream".
- ☼ Bread, cookies and other baked goods.
- ☼ Processed breakfast cereals
- ☼ Instant potatoes, soups, and breakfast drinks
- ☼ Margarine
- ☼ Lunch meats (other than kosher)
- ☼ Salad dressings
- ☼ Candies and other snacks
- ☼ Mixes for pancakes, biscuits, cookies, etc.
- ☼ Milk chocolate
- ☼ Medications - Ask a pharmacist if medications you take contain lactose.

#### **Are You getting enough Calcium?**

If you can't tolerate dairy products in large amounts, you can get calcium in broccoli, leafy greens, canned salmon, almonds, oranges, certain kinds of tofu and soymilk, and calcium-fortified breads and juices. You should consider taking a calcium supplement if you are unable to consume dairy products.