

Confusion over lactose intolerance means many are avoiding dairy unnecessarily



More and more of your customers will be aware of food allergies and intolerances, yet there is still confusion surrounding the causes and symptoms of lactose intolerance (LI) and as a result they may be unnecessarily cutting out dairy from their diets altogether.

LI and Dairy Allergy Explained

In the UK it is estimated that the incidence of LI is one in seven, but many people are experiencing discomfort on a daily basis from consuming lactose, often mistaking it for what they believe to be dairy intolerance, without realising that the lactose could actually be causing their discomfort.

Furthermore, confusion over the meaning of 'dairy intolerance' is causing people to unnecessarily eliminate dairy products from their diet. Avoiding milk and milk products altogether, without a carefully managed diet, can result in long term health problems such as osteoporosis, caused by a lack of calcium. It is therefore important for the lactose intolerant customer to eat calcium rich foods such as fish with soft bones, fortified juices, green leafy vegetables, fortified breakfast cereals and if necessary, supplements. It is also important to ensure an adequate intake of vitamin D to aid calcium absorption.

With help and guidance from pharmacists, LI can be easily managed and symptoms can be controlled through making very small changes to diet.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of lactose intolerance (the body's inability to digest lactose, the natural sugar found in milk) appear between 30 minutes to 2 hours

after ingesting lactose. The severity of symptoms differs from person to person and, although not life threatening, they can have a real impact on the individual's quality of life.

The most common symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Bloating
- Flatulence

These symptoms are not limited to lactose intolerance, meaning the condition can often be misdiagnosed as a dairy allergy or intolerance, or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). It is estimated that up to 80% of people diagnosed with IBS in fact have lactose intolerance.

Testing for LI

A reliable test for establishing LI is the Elimination Diet, developed by Lactofree and reviewed by the British Dietetic Association (BDA). It involves eliminating all foods and drinks containing lactose from the diet for two weeks to see if symptoms disappear.

If symptoms do not disappear, then they are unlikely to have lactose intolerance. If symptoms do substantially reduce then lactose can be slowly re-introduced into the diet see how much can be tolerated. Your customers should not eliminate foods completely and must ensure they eat a range of calcium rich foods.

Managing LI

There is no cure for lactose intolerance and it can be both a temporary and permanent condition. For those with an intolerance to lactose, a complete diet overhaul is often unnecessary as the symptoms can be easily minimised with a lactose-reduced diet using Lactofree.

Lactofree*, the UK's first and only lactose

free dairy range of products - including whole and semi-skimmed milk, hard and soft cheese, flavoured and natural yogurt - allows lactose intolerant individuals to enjoy the full taste and nutritional benefits of cows' milk without the side effects that lactose brings. It can be used in cooking and is suitable for children from the age of one.

Lactofree starts off as regular cow's milk and is filtered to remove virtually all of the lactose. The addition of the lactase enzyme breaks down the remaining lactose, so it can be digested without any unpleasant side effects.

Lactofree is not suitable for people who suffer from galactacemia (a hereditary disease that is caused by the lack of the liver enzyme required to digest lactose).

Visit www.lactofree.co.uk for details on the elimination diet, a list of foods containing lactose and information on how your customers can manage the condition.

Useful tips for helping people to learn about their condition and stay well:

- Always check the labelling on food for lactose or milk derivatives
- Check the labelling on tablets and inform the pharmacist dispensing the medicine of the condition
- In the early stages of diagnosis, keep a food diary to establish which foods cause symptoms
- Carry some lactase enzyme tablets or drops for when lactose avoidance is not possible
- Use Lactofree products



*We make every effort possible to ensure that Lactofree contains no lactose. We carry out rigorous scientific testing using the most accurate UKAS - accredited tests available which enable us to detect lactose at the trace level of 0.03%. At this detection level our tests show that there is no lactose present in Lactofree. Please refer to lactofree.co.uk for more information. Not suitable for milk allergy sufferers. If in any doubt your customer should consult their doctor before consumption.

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