
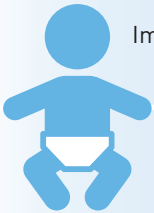








Lactose intolerance is one of the most common forms of food intolerance and is often confused with cow's milk allergy

Lactose intolerance results from a reduced ability to digest lactose, the main digestible carbohydrate in mammalian milk. The fermentation of undigested lactose can lead to gastrointestinal symptoms similar to the symptoms of cow's milk allergy.

Cow's milk allergy		Lactose intolerance (primary or adult type)	
			
Immune-mediated reaction	MECHANISM	Enzyme deficiency	
Peaks during the first year of life	ONSET OF SYMPTOMS	Onset of symptoms: 5-6 years of age	
Tends to remit in childhood (2-5 years of age)	RESOLUTION	Irreversible	
Cow's milk proteins	FOOD INVOLVED	Lactose	
Angioedema of the lips, tongue, and palate; oral pruritus, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, blood and/or mucus in stool	GASTROINTESTINAL SYMPTOMS	Abdominal pain, nausea, bloating, flatulence, diarrhea	
Skin (urticaria, angioedema); respiratory system (from nasal itching to shortness of breath); other (signs of anaphylaxis); atopic eczema	EXTRAIESTINAL SYMPTOMS	Headache, vertigo, memory impairment, lethargy	
Oral food challenge	DIAGNOSTIC TEST	Lactose breath test	
Diet free of cow's milk protein	DIETARY TREATMENT	Low-lactose diet	

When to restrict lactose

Congenital lactase deficiency <i>Complete exclusion of lactose</i> 	Primary lactose intolerance <i>Low lactose</i> 	Secondary lactose intolerance <i>Low lactose (temporarily)</i> 	Cow's milk allergy <i>No restriction (except in the case of severe enteropathy)</i> 
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Unnecessary elimination of lactose from the infant's diet is disadvantageous for the development of a healthy gut microbiome.

A better knowledge of the differences between lactose intolerance and cow's milk allergy can help limit misunderstandings in diagnosing and managing these conditions.

Lactose intolerance

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