

Lactose intolerance occurs when your body cannot digest milk sugar called lactose. Lactose is found in dairy products, such as cow's milk, cheese, ice cream, and pudding. During cancer treatment, it is common for patients to experience lactose intolerance. Cancer therapy can inhibit the growth of cells in your intestines that produce enzymes that digest lactose. Symptoms of lactose intolerance may include diarrhea, bloating, gas, and stomach cramping after consuming dairy products. These symptoms may improve over time or when treatment ends. However, sometimes lactose intolerance is a life-long problem. The following recommendations may help to relieve your symptoms.

- **Avoid dairy products and foods containing lactose, and instead, choose lactose-free or reduced lactose milk products.**
 - Most grocery stores sell lactose-free milk and ice cream.
 - Consider trying products made with soy or rice instead. Soy milk, rice milk, and almond milk are available at most grocery stores.
 - Yogurt with live active cultures and hard cheeses such as parmesan and aged cheddar are lower in lactose. You may find these to be better tolerated and less likely to cause symptoms
 - Avoid using butter, margarine, cream, or soft cheeses when cooking or preparing foods.
- **Read labels carefully.**
 - Avoid foods that have been prepared with milk, butter, milk solids, cream, casein, or whey.
 - Avoid products with ingredient lists that say “May contain milk”.
- **Talk to your doctor about using over-the-counter enzymes.**
 - Lactase enzyme products are available in capsule, liquid, or pill form.

Contact PearlPoint Cancer Support today by phone or email:
(877) 467-1936 X 101 or guidance@pearlpoint.org
Create a profile at my.pearlpoint.org.

- Taking these enzymes with your meal may help you to digest the lactose in milk and prevent symptoms.
- **Choose other calcium-fortified or high-calcium foods.**
 - Read labels to find foods that have been fortified with calcium to ensure you are meeting your calcium needs.
 - There are many ways to meet your calcium needs from foods other than dairy products. Other good sources of calcium include leafy green vegetables, broccoli, fortified orange juice, fortified cereals, canned salmon, tofu, almonds, soy beans, and white beans.
 - Talk with your physician or a registered dietitian about whether you could benefit from taking a calcium supplement.