



# Tips for Shopping and Eating Away from Home on a Lactose-Free Eating Plan

If you have lactose intolerance, it is important to look for lactose-free or dairy-free products. Here are tips on how to stay lactose-free while shopping and eating away from home.

## Shopping Tips

- Read the ingredient list each time you purchase an item, even if you have purchased it before. Ingredients may change at any time without notification, and different sizes and versions of the same product may contain different ingredients.
- Grocery store delis slice various types of deli meats and sometimes even cheese on shared slicers. Choose instead packaged deli meat or ask the deli to slice your order first thing in the morning on a clean machine and set it aside for you to pick up later in the day.
- Kosher delis will carry meat products without milk ingredients, and they do not use shared equipment for meat and cheese products.

## Eating Out Tips

- When eating in restaurants, use “chef cards,” available from the Food Allergy Research & Education website (search “food allergy chef cards” at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)). You can list all the ingredients that should be avoided on your card. Present the chef card and discuss which ingredients to avoid as well as how to avoid cross-contact. Even though you don’t have a milk allergy per say, you need to avoid milk in recipes in order to avoid lactose. You will want to treat this like a milk allergy when you’re eating out at a restaurant.
- Avoid complex dishes and desserts with multiple ingredients or sauces as they may have hidden lactose-containing milk ingredients.
- Be aware that cross-contact is likely in salad bars and buffets. Serving utensils may be shared, and foods can spill and splash.

- Before going out, look for ingredient information on websites for fast-food and chain restaurants. Be aware that restaurant companies may use multiple food suppliers, and ingredients or recipes may change over time. Always reconfirm that food is safe before ordering.

## Travel Tips

- Pack lactose-free snacks and some staple foods.
- If necessary, request special hotel accommodations such as a room with a refrigerator or kitchenette.
- Investigate restaurants ahead of time and call ahead with special requests. If you are traveling abroad, consider chef cards printed in the destination’s native language.
- If lactase enzyme supplements help to ease your symptoms, carry extra with you when you travel.
- Know how to call emergency services at your destination, especially if traveling abroad. Be familiar with the location and distance of local hospitals and urgent care facilities.
- When traveling by plane:
  - Bring lactase enzyme supplements in their original packaging and keep them with you at your seat.
  - Pack lactose-free snacks and meals for the trip and include extra food in case there are delays.

*\*Information from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Tips for Managing a Milk Allergy, Page 3-4.*