

WHY DAIRY-FREE DIETS?

Reduced-dairy or dairy-free diets are necessary for individuals who have lactose intolerance or allergies to an ingredient found in dairy foods. Lactose intolerance and dairy allergy is not the same thing.

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

Food intolerance is due to a lack of a specific chemical or enzyme needed to digest a food.

Individuals who have lactose intolerance have reduced levels, or a complete lack of the enzyme lactase. This enzyme is necessary to digest lactose, or milk sugar. People with severe lactose deficiency cannot eat any dairy products, including milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, some margarines and butter. Those who produce some lactase can consume small amounts of dairy foods such as yogurt and cheddar cheese. It is estimated that about 25 percent of Americans experience some form of lactose intolerance. Symptoms vary from one individual to the next.

Common symptoms include:

- BLOATING • STOMACH CRAMPS • DIARRHEA • EXCESSIVE GAS • NAUSEA

DAIRY ALLERGY

Food allergy is an immune system response to something in a food-usually a protein-that the body mistakenly thinks is harmful. When this happens, the body creates antibodies to fight the reaction. A food allergy can be mild or serious and varies among individuals.

Common symptoms include:

- HIVES
- RASHES
- DIARRHEA
- WHEEZING
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH
- DIFFICULTY IN SWALLOWING

Some people experience a severe condition called anaphylaxis. Although rare, anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction that requires immediate medical attention and treatment. Many individuals with food allergies carry "epi-pens" which dispense epinephrine to treat the allergic reaction.

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SOURCES OF DAIRY

Major Sources of Dairy

- Milk in any form
(whole, low fat, skim, evaporated, condensed, dry, acidophilus milk, milk solids, malted milk)
- Cheese in any form
- Cottage Cheese, Cream Cheese, and Sour Cream
- Yogurt, Frozen Yogurt, Sherbet
- Ice Cream and Ice Milk
- Half and Half, Whipping Cream, and Coffee Cream
- Pudding, Custard
- Butter, including artificial butter flavor
- Ghee
- Margarine (unless labeled “dairy free” or Kosher)

Hidden Sources of Dairy

- Casein and Caseinates
- Whey
- Rennet
- Lactose and Lactulose
- Lactalbumin and Lactoglobulin
- Curd

It is important to read labels carefully. Many prepared foods contain dairy. Common foods with hidden dairy include: luncheon meats, sauces, condiments such as mayonnaise, snack crackers and chips, candy, baked goods, and even vegetarian products such as “cheese”, “burgers”, and “lunch meats”.

FOOD PREPARATION TIPS FOR CUSTOMERS ON DAIRY-FREE OR REDUCED-DAIRY DIETS

There are a number of soy and rice-based dairy substitutes which can be purchased through food suppliers (such as *United Natural Foods*), and at local grocery stores. These products can be used in place of their dairy counterparts in many recipes. In addition keep the following tips in mind when preparing special diets:

- Prepare dairy-free meals with clean pans and utensils, and in areas that are separate from major food production.
- Prepare modified meals to order and avoid the possibility of cross-contamination.
- Identify a core team of foodservice personnel in each dining location to work with students who have specialized diets.
- Educate all members of the foodservice team, including management, about the common food allergens and allergy symptoms.

SERVING TIPS

- Advise staff to pay close attention when a guest says he or she has a food allergy.
- If the server does not know if a menu item contains a the potentially offending food, he or she should say so, and refer the guest to a manager who has been designated to answer the question.
- Ideally, there should be a point person who is prepared to answer questions about ingredients.
- Train staff to call for emergency aid if they see a guest in distress.

DAIRY-FREE MENU IDEAS:

Meat or Vegetable Lasagna: Use with crumbled extra firm tofu, soy mozzarella cheese, and vegan parmesan cheese in place of regular cheese. Use eggs, lasagna noodles, vegetables, and tomato sauce per recipe specifications.

Macaroni and Cheese: Use plain soymilk, vegan margarine and American or Cheddar-style vegan soy cheese in place of their dairy counterparts. Follow recipe instructions for traditional macaroni and cheese, using flour to thicken sauce, macaroni noodles, and seasonings.

Cheese and Cheese with Meat Quesadillas: Follow traditional quesadilla recipe, using vegan Cheddar soy cheese.

Cheese and Cheese with Meat Pizza: Follow traditional method of pizza preparation. Use vegan soy mozzarella cheese, vegan parmesan cheese, and vegan margarine.

Plain Baked or Grilled Meat and Fish: Have these options available at all times for an easy, non-dairy entrée.

The **Food Allergen Labeling Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)** also known as the Food Allergy Bill, was passed in 2004. This legislation will require food labels to identify in plain, simple language if a product contains any of, the 8 major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts and soybeans. These 8 allergens cause about 90 percent of food allergic reactions. For example, the label may state “contains milk (casein)”. The legislation goes into effect on January 2006 although many manufacturers are voluntarily providing this information now.

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