

## 10 signs you're not lactose intolerant, even if you think you are



- Lactose intolerance is something that a lot of people experience over the course of their lives or, at least, they might think that they do.
- But there are a lot of symptoms of lactose intolerance that can also be symptoms of other conditions, like irritable bowel syndrome, allergies, food sensitivities, and more.
- Knowing what sorts of things might point to you not being lactose intolerant is worth it because it might actually be something else entirely - and once you're armed with that information, you can better address what's really going on.

Chances are there's someone in your life that doesn't eat dairy products. And though many might make that choice because of ethical considerations and the like, others choose to abstain because they feel that dairy products make them feel bloated and gassy, resulting in painful cramps, diarrhoea, or other sorts of digestive upset. It's just not worth it if eating those sorts of foods make you feel sick. But it might not actually be lactose intolerance that's the culprit. Rather, you might be mistaking what you're experiencing for lactose intolerance, but it could actually be something else. Here's what you may need to know.

**You've had diarrhoea for an extended period of time, even though you've cut out dairy.**



Diarrhoea can be an unfortunate side effect that comes along with some food sensitivities, intolerances, and other conditions, like lactose intolerance. But if you've experienced it for an extended amount of time, even if you haven't been eating dairy, it might not be lactose intolerance that's the problem.

"If a patient finds that symptoms of diarrhoea or loose stools extend long beyond any period where any dairy or lactose containing products is consumed, then this change in bowel habits should also be investigated for any potential sinister cause," [Dr. Donald Tsynman, MD](#), a New York City-based gastroenterologist, told INSIDER. Having a conversation with your doctor and potentially getting a gastroenterologist or other specialist involved could be a good idea.

**You accidentally ate or drank something that contained dairy, but didn't experience any negative side effects within about two hours.**



Typically, symptoms and complications related to lactose intolerance are going to show up relatively quickly.

"A person who is lactose intolerant will feel nauseous with 30 minutes to two hours of consuming milk or dairy," [Dr. Niket Sonpal, MD](#), a New York City-based gastroenterologist and an adjunct assistant professor at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, told INSIDER. Longer than about two hours could indicate another condition.

**You're also dealing with some serious fatigue.**



Even if you have a number of digestive issues that suggest you might be lactose intolerant, if you're experiencing other symptoms as well, that could also be a hint that it's not actually lactose intolerance with which you're dealing. Sonpal said that fatigue is one such symptom that could mean that a doctor may need to further investigate to find out what's really going on.

**It's actually a different food sensitivity that's causing symptoms.**



"The symptoms of lactose intolerance are kind of broad and can overlap with a lot of other things. So typically, diarrhoea, nausea, sometimes vomiting, but usually not, gas, bloating, abdominal cramps, but those can be the symptoms of a lot of things," [Dr. Michael Nusbaum, MD](#), a bariatric surgeon, told INSIDER. "I have patients who come in all the time and they will come in and they will say, "I have irritable bowel syndrome," or "I've got lactose intolerance," you know, there are easy ways to test for that and that's how we kind of start it is checking these patients and seeing what they're actually, what's actually going on in their bodies, and what I've found over the last 20 years of doing this, is that a lot of patients have food sensitivities and they don't even realise and it's maybe not lactose intolerance."

It can be difficult to determine if you truly have lactose intolerance or another food sensitivity if you're experiencing painful, uncomfortable, or even debilitating symptoms, particularly if you're not always eating whole foods or each potential ingredient on its own. So just because it seems to be lactose intolerance doesn't necessarily mean that it truly is.

**You did an elimination diet on your own.**

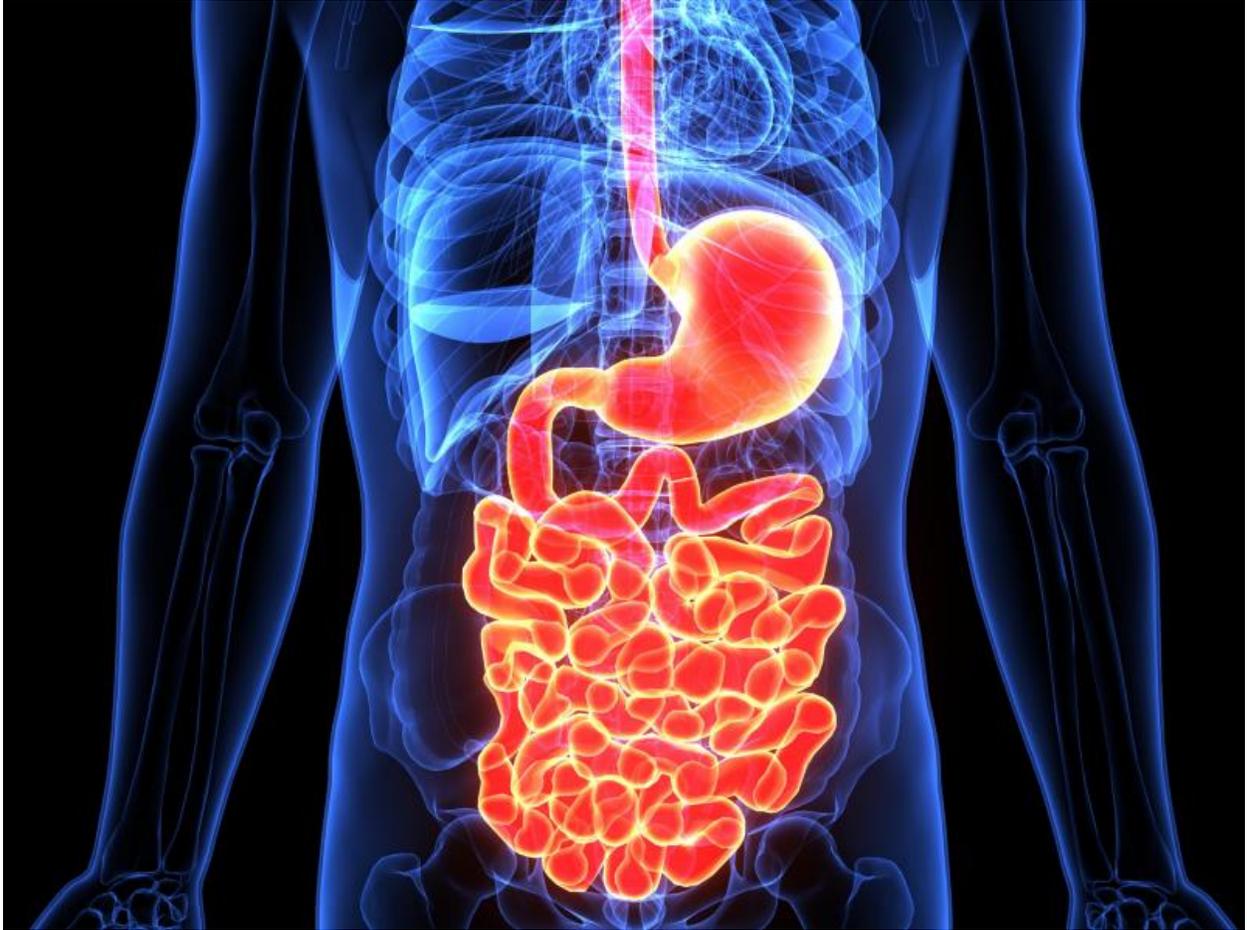


Elimination diets can help you determine what sorts of things you might actually react to when you eat or drink them, so they can be useful tools when you're trying to get to the bottom of your symptoms. If you try to go it on your own with an elimination diet, you might end up with a skewed or misleading end result.

"You didn't really read it right because you don't really understand it because things overlap," Nusbaum explained. He recommended having a physician oversee your elimination diet so that they can ensure that any conclusions you're drawing from the test are the correct ones. Because, as Nusbaum further explained, some things can sort of overlap, which could mean that you thought it was a certain fruit to which you reacted, but it was actually a nut or something else that overlaps with that particular fruit.

Confusing? Maybe, but that's why recruiting the help of a professional can help ensure that it goes more smoothly.

**You actually have some food allergies or other intestinal situations going on.**



Food allergies, food sensitivities, and lactose intolerance can all have a ton of overlapping symptoms, which really can make discerning between all of the possibilities quite difficult.

"Lactose is only one of the dietary intolerances that should be considered when patients have symptoms of alternating bowel habits or symptoms of GI distress with different foods," Tsynman said. "Patients can also consider evaluations for a fructose intolerance, a sucrose intolerance celiac disease, food allergies, infectious causes of irregular bowels, or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth."

**A doctor has never diagnosed you with lactose intolerance.**



A lot of people who think they have lactose intolerance don't actually know that they have it - they have diagnosed themselves. But if a doctor has never diagnosed you with lactose intolerance, the fact of the matter is that you might not actually have it.

"Lactose intolerance has gone mainstream with a lot of over the counter remedies leading to a lot of self diagnosis," Sonpal said. "It is however, important to see a doctor and get a full exam to see if there isn't anything more serious going on."

**You've unexpectedly gained or lost some weight recently.**



Gaining or losing weight can also be a potential indication that your abdominal issues aren't actually due to lactose intolerance. Weight gain can be due to food sensitivities, according to Nusbaum, while weight loss too could mean something more significant than just lactose intolerance, Sonpal said.

**You're also constipated.**



If you're not dealing with something like diarrhoea, but otherwise have many of the symptoms of lactose intolerance, it could potentially actually be a condition like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). WebMD noted that, when it comes to [IBS, you might experience constipation](#), "mucus in your stool," or feel like you just can go as much as you need to. That seemingly slight difference in symptoms can mean a big difference when it comes to a diagnosis.

**You've lost your appetite.**



If you're regularly experiencing painful symptoms, you might expect that it may be difficult to eat or have much of an appetite. Still, if you're experiencing a loss of appetite, it might not be lactose intolerance. According to Healthline, [loss of appetite is a symptom that can be associated with Crohn's disease](https://www.healthline.com/health/loss-of-appetite), but isn't associated with lactose intolerance. So if you've lost your appetite, speaking with your doctor, a specialist, or another professional can help you determine if your symptoms are actually signs of something else.

If you don't actually have lactose intolerance after all, there are a number of other things that it could potentially be that's causing your symptoms. Getting to the root of the problem is what's most important.

<https://au.finance.yahoo.com/news/10-signs-apos-not-lactose-214202265.html>