

Lactose intolerance and the lowdown on lactose.

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Introduction

Lactose intolerance is a common digestive disorder that affects a significant proportion of the global population. The condition is characterized by the inability of the body to digest lactose, which is a sugar found in milk and dairy products. Lactose intolerance can cause a wide range of symptoms, including abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea and flatulence, which can significantly impact an individual's quality of life. In this blog post, we will discuss lactose intolerance in detail, including its causes, symptoms and treatment options. Lactose intolerance is caused by a deficiency of lactase, which is an enzyme produced by the cells lining the small intestine. Lactase is responsible for breaking down lactose into glucose and galactose, which can be easily absorbed by the body. In individuals with lactose intolerance, the production of lactase is reduced, leading to the accumulation of lactose in the intestine, where it is fermented by bacteria, leading to the production of gas and other by-products that can cause gastrointestinal symptoms.

Lactose intolerance can be primary or secondary. Primary lactose intolerance is a genetic condition that occurs when the body produces less lactase as a person ages. Secondary lactose intolerance, on the other hand, is caused by an underlying medical condition, such as celiac disease, Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. In these cases, lactose intolerance is a temporary condition that can improve once the underlying condition is treated.

Description

Symptoms of lactose intolerance

The symptoms of lactose intolerance can vary depending on the severity of the condition. Some people may be able to tolerate small amounts of lactose without experiencing any symptoms, while others may experience severe symptoms after consuming even small amounts of lactose.

The most common symptoms of lactose intolerance include abdominal pain, bloating, gas, diarrhea and nausea. These symptoms usually occur within 30 minutes to 2 hours after consuming lactose containing foods or drinks.

In infants and young children, lactose intolerance can cause poor growth, irritability and diarrhea. If left untreated, lactose intolerance can also lead to malnutrition, especially in children.

Diagnosis of lactose intolerance

The diagnosis of lactose intolerance is usually based on the symptoms experienced by the individual after consuming lactose containing foods or drinks. However, these symptoms can also be caused by other medical conditions, so it is essential to rule out other possible causes.

One way to diagnose lactose intolerance is to perform a lactose tolerance test. This test involves consuming a drink containing a high dose of lactose, followed by a series of blood tests to measure the level of glucose in the blood. If the body is unable to break down lactose, the level of glucose in the blood will not rise, indicating lactose intolerance.

Another diagnostic test is the hydrogen breath test. This test involves consuming a drink containing lactose, followed by the measurement of the hydrogen levels in the breath. If the body is unable to digest lactose, the undigested lactose will be fermented by bacteria in the intestine, leading to the production of hydrogen gas. The hydrogen gas is then exhaled in the breath, which can be measured to diagnose lactose intolerance.

Treatment of lactose intolerance

The treatment of lactose intolerance usually involves avoiding or limiting the consumption of lactose containing foods or drinks. This can be challenging, especially for individuals who enjoy dairy products, but there are many lactose free alternatives available, such as lactose free milk, cheese and yogurt.

In some cases, individuals with lactose intolerance may be able to tolerate small amounts of lactose without experiencing any symptoms. This can be determined through trial and error, where the individual gradually introduces small amounts of lactose containing foods.

Lactose is a sugar found in milk and milk products. It is a disaccharide, meaning it is made up of two smaller sugar molecules, glucose and galactose. Lactose is an important nutrient for babies and young children, as it provides energy and helps with the absorption of calcium and other essential minerals. However, some people are unable to digest lactose properly, leading to a condition called lactose intolerance. In this blog post, we will discuss the lowdown on lactose, including its functions, sources and potential health effects.

Functions of lactose

Lactose is an important source of energy for infants and young children, as it provides about 30% of the energy in breast milk and infant formula. Lactose is also essential for the absorption of calcium, which is crucial for bone health. Calcium is absorbed in the small intestine, where it combines with lactose to form a complex that can be easily absorbed by the body. Lactose also helps to maintain the balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut, which is important for overall digestive health.

Conclusion

Lactose intolerance has been recognized for many years as a common problem throughout the world. Although rarely life

threatening, the symptoms of lactose intolerance can lead to significant discomfort, disrupted quality of life and work time, all at a cost to individuals, families and society.

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