

People sometimes confuse lactose intolerance with a milk allergy. While lactose intolerance is a digestive problem, a milk allergy is a reaction by the body's immune system to one or more milk proteins. If you have a milk allergy, having even a small amount of milk or milk product can be life threatening. A milk allergy most commonly occurs in the first year of life. Lactose intolerance occurs more often during the teen years or adulthood.

## Can anyone have lactose intolerance?

Anyone can have lactose intolerance. In the United States, some people are more likely to be lactose intolerant, including

- African Americans
- American Indians
- Hispanics/Latinos
- Asian Americans

People with European heritage are least likely to be lactose intolerant.