

## Lactose Tolerance – Hydrogen Breath Test

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### Hotel Dieu Hospital

#### Why am I having this test?

- Your Doctor is concerned that you may be unable to digest milk products ('Lactose').

#### How does this test work?

- Measuring the change in the amount of hydrogen and methane in your breath samples after you are given a lactose drink may tell your doctor if your body is unable to break down lactose in your food.

**Is this a 'Perfect Test'?** No, your doctor still needs to interpret the results for each specific patient.

#### What will happen during the test?

- You will be asked to rinse your mouth with mouthwash.
- You will then be asked to blow through a mouthpiece into a small foil bag to collect a sample of your breath.
- You will be given a 25gm dose of lactose diluted in water, and then more breath samples will be collected over a period of 3 hours.
- During the test it will be necessary for you to stay awake. The hydrogen and methane levels in your breath samples will change if you fall asleep.

#### NOTE:

If you have diabetes, discuss with your doctor whether you should adjust your morning medication, as you will be fasting for up to 11 hours.

#### Please review and follow the set of instructions below:

##### 2 days before the test

- Stop taking all antibiotics. Stop medications such as Lactulose, Imodium, Lomotil, Questran, Domperidone (Motilium), Metamucil, Prodiem, Senokot.
- Follow a diet that **avoids all foods containing lactose**. Eat a bland diet, refer to the list on the next page to know which foods to avoid, and which foods you are allowed to eat.

##### 12 hours before the test

- Stop taking all non-prescription medications, ask about prescription medications at time of booking your appointment.
- Do not have anything more to eat.
- May drink **water only**.

##### On the day of your test

- You may brush your teeth before the appointment, but do not swallow any fluid.
- Do not smoke for at least 1 hour before the appointment.
- **The test will take 3 hours to complete.**
- You must not eat or smoke during the collection of the breath samples. **Water only** may be consumed.

- After the test is completed, you may start taking your medications again, and may eat and drink normally after you leave.

## **Possible side effects**

After swallowing the lactose drink, you might experience some gas buildup in your stomach, or some bloating. This should not last long. It could also trigger diarrhea. Please remember these symptoms and mention them to your Doctor when following up- this is almost as important as the test itself.

## **After the test**

Contact your doctor's office and book a follow-up appointment to discuss the test results.

## **Restricted Lactose Diet (Follow for 2 days before your test)**

This is not a comprehensive list. You should read labels to ensure products you are using do not contain lactose.

### **Foods to Avoid**

- Milk, cheese, curd, ice cream, ice milk, yoghurt, yoghurt drinks, goat milk products, cream, sour cream, buttermilk
- Cream soups and cheese sauces
- Processed meats
- Sugar/ artificial sweeteners
- Chocolate / Caramels
- Butter, margarine containing lactose
- Fast Food French fries
- High fibre foods – beans, bran, cereal, multigrain/Flax bread, bagels, waffles, crepes, pancakes (as they take longer to digest)

### **Foods you Can Eat**

- Commercially available Lactose-reduced milk (Lactaid, Lactease, Rice Milk, DariFree)
- Lactose Free margarine (check product label)
- Baked or broiled chicken, fish or turkey
- Plain steamed white rice
- Eggs
- Clear chicken or beef broth
- White bread only
- Cream Substitutes (Coffee Mate, Coffee Rich)
- All Fruits / Vegetables
- Regular pasta
- All soy products

## **Where do I go for this test?**

This procedure is performed in the Gastroenterology (GI) Function Unit, 4th Floor, Room 473, Hotel Dieu Hospital. Please report to the Jeanne Mance 4 Registration Desk.

If you have any problems or questions, phone the GI Function Testing Unit at 613-544-3400 ext 2417:

- Monday & Friday 8:00am to 12:00pm
- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:00am to 2:00pm