
**Abstract**

Dairy products containing live bacteria that possess lactase activity are used for dietary management of lactose maldigestion. The efficacy of acidophilus milk and the effect of consuming unfermented milk that had been inoculated with yogurt bacteria have not been examined in children. We compared scores for breath H\(_2\) excretion and symptoms of 20 lactose-maldigesting children following ingestion of 250 ml of uninoculated milk with two identical milks inoculated with \(10^{10}\) cells of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* or with a commercial yogurt starter culture containing \(10^8\) cells of *Lactobacillus lactis* and \(10^{10}\) cells of *Streptococcus thermophilus*. Nine of 10 subjects who were symptomatic following ingestion of uninoculated milk experienced a reduction in symptoms following ingestion of milk inoculated with *L. acidophilus*, without a decline in H\(_2\) excretion. Five of 6 subjects who were symptomatic following uninoculated milk had decreased symptoms and a significant reduction in H\(_2\) excretion following milk inoculated with the yogurt culture. For lactose-maldigesting children, milks inoculated with *L. acidophilus* or with a yogurt culture were associated with decreased symptoms compared with those with uninoculated milk.