

Nutrition Nuggets: **Secret Ingredients from Milk**

Excerpts from Chapter 19 of [The Vegan Sourcebook](#), by Joanne Stepaniak

It's amazing how frequently animal products are incorporated into many packaged and processed foods. You need to read food labels closely to find hidden animal ingredients. The following are a few of the ingredients derived from cow's milk:

Casein (may also be listed as caseinate, ammonium caseinate, calcium caseinate, potassium caseinate, or sodium caseinate): An animal milk protein that is added to most commercial cheese substitutes to improve their texture and to help them melt better. It is also added to many dairy products such as cream cheese, cottage cheese, and sour cream, to make them firmer. Outside the food industry it is used to make paint, bio-plastics and glue.

Lactose: This sugar occurs naturally in cow's milk and is also called milk sugar. It is commercially produced from whey and is widely used in the food industry as a culture medium (such as in souring milk), as a humectant (a substance that helps a product retain water), and as an ingredient in a wide variety of processed products including baby formulas and confections. Outside the food industry, it is used in bacteriological media, in pharmacology as a diluent (a substance that dilutes the strength of a

solution or mixture) and excipient (a substance added to a drug to give it consistency or form), and as a medical diuretic and laxative.

Lactic acid: A bitter-tasting acid that is formed (1) by fermenting starch, cow's milk whey, molasses, potatoes, or other foods and neutralizing the acid with calcium or zinc carbonate, then decomposing the result with sulfuric acid, or (2) synthetically by the hydrolysis of lactonitrile (vegan). Used to impart a tart flavor, as well as in the preservation of some foods. It occurs naturally in the souring of cow's milk and can be found in dairy products such as cheese and yogurt. It is also used in the production of acid-fermented foods such as pickles, olives, and sauerkraut, and is used as an acidulant (a substance added to foods to increase either tartness or acidity) and flavoring agent in beverages, candy, frozen desserts (sherbets and ices), chocolate, fruit preserves, and other processed products. Outside the food industry, it is used chiefly in dyeing, textile printing, and in medicines.

Whey: The watery liquid that separates from milk solids in cheese making. It is found in crackers, breads, cakes, and many other processed foods.

