

18.2: Disaccharides

Milk is one of the basic foods needed for good nutrition, especially for growing children. It contains vitamins and minerals necessary for healthy development. Unfortunately, milk and other dairy products also contain lactose, a carbohydrate that can make some people very ill. Lactose intolerance is a condition in which the lactose in milk cannot be digested well in the small intestine. The undigested lactose then moves into the large intestine where bacteria attack it, forming large amounts of gas. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, cramps, nausea, and vomiting. Often, in the case of children, the individual will outgrow this problem. Avoidance of foods containing lactose is recommended for people who show signs of lactose intolerance. Since dairy products can provide many vital nutrients, tablets can be taken that provide the needed digestive materials in the small intestine. Lactose-free milk is also readily available.

Disaccharides

The simple sugars form the foundation of more complex carbohydrates. The cyclic forms of two sugars can be linked together by means of a condensation reaction. The figure below shows how a glucose molecule and a fructose molecule combine to form a sucrose molecule. A hydrogen atom from one molecule and a hydroxyl group from the other molecule are eliminated as water, with a resulting covalent bond linking the two sugars together at that point.

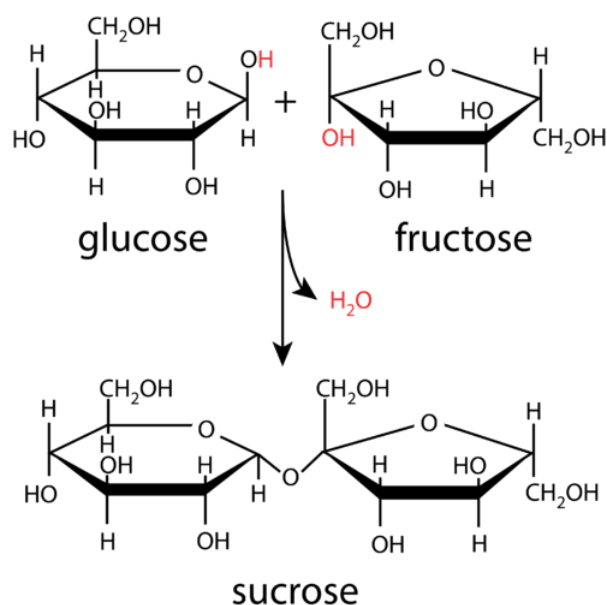


Figure 18.2.1: Glucose and fructose combine to produce the disaccharide sucrose in a condensation reaction.

Sucrose, commonly known as table sugar, is an example of a disaccharide. A **disaccharide** is a carbohydrate formed by the joining of two monosaccharides. Other common disaccharides include lactose and maltose. Lactose, a component of milk, is formed from glucose and galactose, while maltose is formed from two glucose molecules.

During digestion, these disaccharides are hydrolyzed in the small intestine to form the component monosaccharides, which are then absorbed across the intestinal wall and into the bloodstream to be transported to the cells.

Lactose

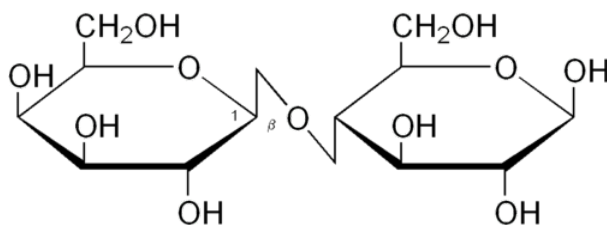


Figure 18.2.2: Lactose.

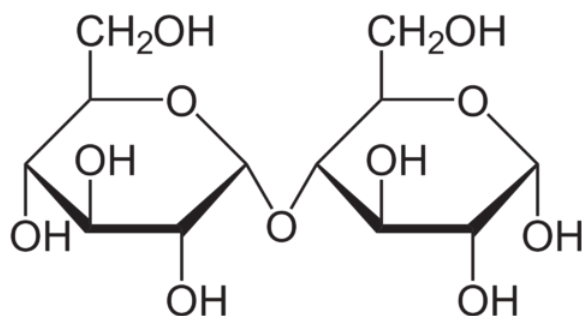


Figure 18.2.3: Maltose.

Summary

- A **disaccharide** is a carbohydrate formed by the joining of two monosaccharides.
- Common disaccharides include sucrose, lactose, and maltose.

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