

Low FODMAP Diet

What Are FODMAPs?

FODMAP is an acronym that stands for:

F - Fermentable

O - Oligosaccharides (Fructans & Galactans)

D - Disaccharides (Lactose)

M - Monosaccharides (Excess Fructose)

A - And

P - Polyols

These are different types of carbohydrates or sugars that are difficult to digest and poorly absorbed. Essentially these forms of carbohydrates can worsen symptoms in people with Irritable Bowel syndrome (IBS) and Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO) and increase symptoms such as gas, bloating, cramping and diarrhoea, as well as other symptoms.

Food intolerances are not typically the underlying cause, however increasing evidence shows food intolerances can worsen digestive symptoms in people with IBS.

Why Are FODMAPs Bad For Me?

FODMAPs are a collection of short-chained carbohydrates (sugar molecules) that are unsuccessfully broken down in the upper digestive tract, leading to bacterial fermentation in the lower digestive tract. This fermentation process draws in fluid and produces gas, often contributing to the symptoms of IBS. There is a large correlation between a Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO) and IBS, which can be worsened by FODMAPs.

Many FODMAP containing foods are not unhealthy for us. However, in some conditions, such as IBS and SIBO, they can contribute to symptoms. Following a low FODMAP diet aims at decreasing the amount of these molecules within your diet to decrease fermentation in the gastrointestinal system and therefore reducing the associated signs and symptoms you experience.

Clinical trials have found improvements in IBS symptoms upward of 74% by introducing a Low FODMAP diet.

What Foods Do I Eat and Avoid?

	High FODMAP (Avoid)	Low FODMAP (Consume These)
Vegetables	Avocado, Artichoke, Asparagus, Beetroot, Cauliflower, Garlic, Green peas, Leek, Onion, Sugar snap peas	Eggplant, beans (green), Bok choy, Capsicum, Carrot, Cucumber, Lettuce, Potato, Tomato, Zucchini, Parsnip, Sweet potato, Potato, Spinach, Celery
Fruits	Apples, Fruit juice, Cherries, Dried Fruit, Mango, Mushrooms, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Prunes, Watermelon	Bananas, Blueberries, Grapes, Kiwi fruit, Mandarin, Orange, Pineapple, Raspberries Strawberries
Dairy and alternatives	Cow's Milk, Custard, Ice cream, Soy milk (made from whole soybeans), Yoghurt	Almond milk, Brie cheese, Camembert cheese, Hard cheeses, Feta, Lactose free milk, Soy milk (made from soy protein)
Proteins	Legumes, Chickpeas, Lentils, Baked beans, Kidney beans, Some marinated meats	Eggs, Seafood, Chicken, Beef, Lamb, Pork, Kangaroo, Tempeh
Breads and Cereal products	Wheat/Barley/Rye containing breads, biscuits, and cakes	Quinoa, Rice, Oats, Corn, Sourdough bread
Sugars/ Confectionary	High fructose corn syrup, Honey, Sugar-free confectionary, Sweeteners including mannitol (421) sorbitol (420)*, xylitol (967)*, maltitol (965)* and isomalt (953)*	Dark chocolate, Stevia, Maple syrup
Nuts and Seeds	Cashews, Pistachios	Macadamias, peanuts, walnuts, pepitas

*look out for these numbers on food products as sweeteners are often listed only with a number.

For a more comprehensive list of high and Low FODMAP foods, download the Monash University FODMAP diet app.

Will I Have To Avoid These Foods Forever?

Hopefully not. If the underlying cause of your IBS and health of the gastrointestinal system is improved, then these foods can be introduced back into the diet, whilst monitoring any possible reactions to these foods. This will take time.

“But This Diet is Very Restrictive, I Don’t Think I Can Stick To It!.. ”

It is restrictive, but it can drastically improve symptoms and help you on your way to healing. There are still many foods and delicious meals that can fit this diet, but it will take a bit of time, effort and experimentation to find what works for you.