

Low FODMAP diet fact sheet

What are FODMAPs?

FODMAPs are Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides, and Polyols – which are all scientific names for several poorly digested carbohydrates.

High FODMAPs can be found in many everyday foods, including some you may have thought were “IBS-safe”, like watermelon.

FODMAP food definitions include:

- **Oligosaccharides:** these are complex carbohydrates. They are found in various fruits and vegetables, such as garlic and onions.
- **Disaccharides:** these are double-unit sugars. They are in lactose products, such as milk, yogurt, and soft cheeses.
- **Monosaccharides:** these are single-unit sugars, such as fructose. These types of sugars are found in various fruits including figs and mangoes, and sweeteners such as honey.
- **Polyols:** these are sugars found in certain fruits and vegetables including blackberries, as well as some sweeteners like those in chewing gum.

Eating FODMAPs increases the amount of gas in the intestines. This is because high FODMAP foods ferment more quickly in the gut than non-FODMAPs and release gas as a byproduct. This can lead to IBS symptoms such as abdominal pain and bloating.

FODMAPs can also cause diarrhea and other IBS symptoms. This is because high FODMAP molecules cause the body to draw more fluid into the bowels.

The International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders notes that FODMAPs have the same digestive effects for most people, however, it's only those with more sensitive or easily irritated bowels that experience problematic gut symptoms.

Which foods are high in FODMAPs?

The following foods are high in FODMAPs and should be avoided on a low FODMAP diet:

- **Fruits:** including apples, mangoes, pears, plums, watermelon, canned fruit, peaches, cherries
- **Vegetables:** including celery, cauliflower, onions, garlic, leeks, mushrooms, snow peas, peas, okra
- **Grains:** including wheat, barley, couscous, rye, semolina
- **Lactose-containing foods:** including cow's milk, soft cheeses, ice cream, custard, cream
- **Legumes:** including soybeans, black beans, lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, butter beans
- **Sweeteners:** including sorbitol, high fructose corn syrup, fructose, honey, mannitol
- **Nuts:** including cashews and pistachios

Which foods are low in FODMAPs?

The following foods have been identified as being low in FODMAPs and are allowed on a low FODMAP diet. Keep in mind that FODMAP content depends on portion size. Some foods are low FODMAP in a small serving and high FODMAP in a larger one, so how much you eat matters as much as what you eat. A few foods appear on more than one list for this reason. These include:

- **Fruits:** including banana, blueberry, kiwi, lemon, lime, pineapple, strawberry, grapes
- **Vegetables:** including broccoli (florets), carrots, bok choy, celery (small servings), eggplant*, green beans, kale, lettuce, tomato, corn (small servings)*
- **Grains:** including brown rice, quinoa, oats, gluten-free products
- **Sweeteners:** including sugar (sucrose), maple syrup, glucose, brown sugar
- **Dairy substitutes:** including almond milk, rice milk, coconut milk, lactose-free kinds of milk and yogurts
- **Nuts:** including almonds, pecans, pine nuts, brazil nuts, walnuts, macadamia nuts
- **Protein sources:** including beef, lamb, pork, chicken, eggs, fish, turkey

* These foods are low FODMAP in smaller servings and high FODMAP in larger amounts. For exact serving sizes, check the Monash University FODMAP Diet app at monashfodmap.com.

FODMAP Food Chart – Low FODMAP foods to enjoy

A note on serving sizes: FODMAP content depends on how much you eat. Foods marked with an asterisk (*) are low FODMAP in smaller servings but high FODMAP in larger amounts. For exact serving sizes, the Monash University FODMAP Diet app is the most reliable source: monashfodmap.com

Vegetables

- Alfalfa
- Artichoke
- Bamboo shoots
- Beet shoots
- Bok choy
- Broccoli (florets)*
- Carrot
- Celery (small servings)*
- Choko
- Choy sum
- Corn (small servings)*
- Eggplant*
- Endive
- Ginger
- Green beans
- Lettuces
- Olives
- Parsnip
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Red bell pepper
- Silver beet
- Spinach
- Summer squash (yellow)
- Swede
- Sweet potato
- Taro
- Tomato
- Turnip
- Yam
- Zucchini

Fruits

- Banana
- Blueberry
- Boysenberry
- Cantaloupe
- Cranberry
- Durian
- Grape
- Grapefruit
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Lemon
- Lime
- Mandarin
- Orange
- Passionfruit
- Pawpaw
- Raspberry
- Rhubarb
- Rockmelon
- Star anise
- Strawberry
- Tangelo

Starch

- Gluten-free products
- 100% spelt bread
- Rice
- Oats
- Polenta
- Arrowroot
- Millet
- Psyllium
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- Tapioca

Dairy

- Lactose-free milk
- Oat milk
- Rice milk
- Soy milk (without additives)
- Brie
- Camembert
- Lactose-free yogurt
- Gelato
- Sorbet

* Portion matters for these foods. Broccoli florets are low FODMAP at about 75g; stalks are high. Celery is low FODMAP at about ¼ stalk (10g) and high in larger servings. Sweet corn is low FODMAP at about ½ cob and high in larger amounts. Eggplant is low FODMAP at a typical 1-cup serving.

Want to manage your IBS without giving up the foods you love?

Learn more about the gut-brain connection and see if Nerva is right for you at try.nervaibs.com/fodmap-pdf/



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FODMAP Food Chart – High FODMAP foods to avoid

Some foods are high FODMAP only in larger servings. Foods like celery, broccoli stalks, and sweet corn are high FODMAP in bigger portions but low FODMAP in smaller ones – you’ll find them on the low FODMAP chart with serving guidance. For exact serving sizes, check the Monash University FODMAP Diet app at monashfodmap.com.

Fructans

Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Beetroot
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Eggplant
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Leek
- Okra
- Onion (all)
- Shallots

Carbs

- Wheat and rye
- Bread
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Couscous
- Pasta

Fruits

- Custard apple
- Persimmon
- Watermelon

Other

- Chicory
- Dandelion
- Inulin

Polyols

Fruits

- Apple
- Apricot
- Avocado
- Blackberry
- Cherry
- Lychee
- Nashi
- Nectarine
- Peach
- Pear
- Plum
- Prune
- Watermelon

Vegetables

- Green bell pepper
- Mushroom

Sweeteners

- Sorbitol (420)
- Mannitol (421)
- Isomalt (953)
- Maltitol (965)
- Xylitol (967)

Excess Fructose

Fruit

- Apple
- Mango
- Nashi
- Pear
- Canned fruit in natural juice
- Watermelon

Sweeteners

- Fructose
- High fructose corn syrup
- Corn syrup
- Honey

Concentrated fructose

- Concentrated fruit
- Large servings of fruit
- Dried fruit
- Fruit juice

Lactose

Milk

- Cow’s milk
- Goat’s milk
- Sheep milk

Other Dairy

- Custard
- Ice cream
- Yogurt

Soft Cheese

- Cottage cheese
- Cream cheese
- Mascarpone
- Ricotta

Legumes

- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Kidney beans
- Lentils

How to start a low FODMAP diet

Some people mistakenly think that low FODMAP diets function like ketogenic diets, where certain foods are avoided for long periods of time (even years). However, low FODMAP diets are designed to be completed in short stages, whereby some foods are removed from the diet before being slowly reintroduced.

The low FODMAP diet involves three steps:

- 1 Elimination:** first, high FODMAP foods are removed from the diet. This phase generally lasts 3 to 8 weeks.
- 2 Reintroduction:** once symptoms have improved, troublesome foods are slowly reintroduced, one at a time and symptoms are monitored.
- 3 Maintenance:** you resume a normal diet, limiting only the FODMAP foods that cause symptoms. Some people may eventually be able to add many FODMAPs back into their diet without symptoms.

What does science say about the low FODMAP diet?

Numerous clinical trials have found the low FODMAP diet can help people improve their IBS symptoms.

In a recent Australia study, 38 people with IBS were randomly assigned to follow either a low FODMAP diet or a typical Australian diet for three weeks. This was followed by a period of normal eating before participants switched to the alternate diet for another three weeks. Overall symptoms of IBS were reduced by 50% on the low FODMAP diet.

Another study comparing typical healthy eating to a low FODMAP diet for people with IBS showed that significantly more people following a low FODMAP saw improvements in bloating, abdominal pain, and flatulence.

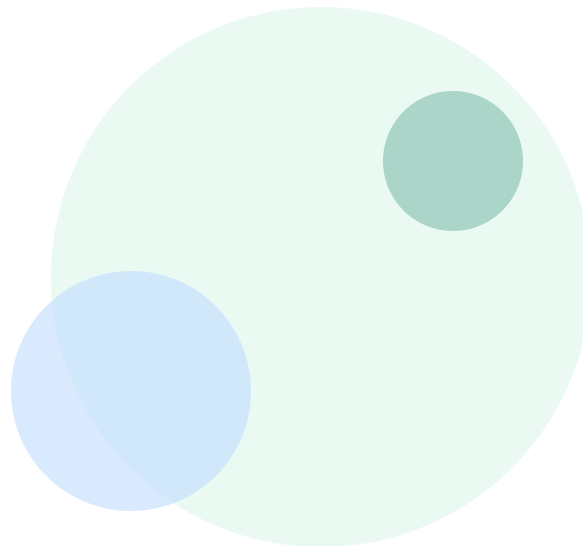
Should I consult a healthcare professional before starting a low FODMAP diet?

The low FODMAP diet can be confusing – there are many different foods you need to track and avoid. It is generally recommended you seek advice from a dietitian or a healthcare professional before starting the diet.

A dietitian or a healthcare professional can help understand the theory behind the diet, outline suitable foods, and provide you with personalized advice.

If you want to start the diet by yourself, there are many online resources like this one.

However, low FODMAP diets are complicated and may affect your nutritional intake, so you should talk to a healthcare professional before getting started.



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What are the possible health risks of a low FODMAP diet?

Some of the possible risks & side-effects of following a restrictive low FODMAP diet include:

1. Nutritional deficiencies

Because a low FODMAP diet cuts out many fruits and vegetables, there is the potential for inadequate nutrient intake. You may need to take vitamin and mineral supplements while on a low FODMAP diet. In particular, it is important that you get enough calcium, iron, zinc and folate intake, and fiber consumption, even if you're cutting out common foods like dairy.

Because a low FODMAP can affect a person's nutritional intake, it's not generally recommended during pregnancy, for people who are underweight, or for people with eating disorders.

2. Disordered eating

There are also risks of becoming disordered in your eating habits after following a restrictive low FODMAP diet. A recent study of over 200 people with IBS showed that those who closely followed the low FODMAP diet showed eating disorder behaviors.

3. Disrupting healthy gut bacteria

Probiotics are 'friendly' bacteria that can improve gut function. Several studies have shown probiotics can improve IBS symptoms such as bloating, pain, and constipation. However, a low FODMAP diet may disrupt your natural gut flora.

One study showed the low FODMAP diet lowered the abundance of 'good' bacteria including Bifidobacteria and Lachnospiraceae. So, if you're planning on completing a low-FODMAP diet, make sure you boost health-promoting bacteria with low FODMAP probiotic foods, such as lactose-free kefir or Greek yogurt.

Alternatives to a low FODMAP diet

If you're looking for a way to manage your IBS without restricting your diet, there are many management strategies available that might work for you, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, meditation, or yoga.

Another IBS management option that's been proven to be as effective as a low-FODMAP diet is gut-directed hypnotherapy.

A recent study indicated that gut-directed hypnotherapy was as effective as the low-FODMAP diet in improving IBS, and was shown to reduce symptoms by up to 70%.

Gut-directed hypnotherapy is a simpler option for many people and can usually calm symptoms within six weeks, without the need for complicated food tracking or diet restrictions.

Can I still go out to eat on a low FODMAP diet?

Many meals contain FODMAPs so eating out on the diet can be challenging. However, if you're looking for a special meal on the town, there are some things you can do to avoid triggering FODMAP foods. Some tips include:

- **Café:** order your tea or coffee with lactose-free milk or almond milk. Choose sandwiches made with gluten-free bread.
- **Pub food:** choose plain meat, fish or chicken without marinade, and a side of low FODMAP salad or fries.
- **Asian cuisine:** choose fried rice or a stir fry with no onion or garlic. Sushi and sashimi are also acceptable options.
- **Italian:** choose gluten-free pasta and request a sauce that does not contain onion or garlic.

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