



Reducing
fermentable
carbohydrates
the low FODMAP way

Introduction

Eating is an essential part of living and the gut (gastrointestinal tract) plays a vital role in delivering nutrients to the body and maintaining health. While the normal functions of the gut are not impaired, many people experience symptoms such as diarrhoea, constipation, bloating, abdominal pain and wind.

These symptoms are often described as Irritable Bowel Syndrome or 'IBS' and affect approximately one in seven people (up to 15% of the population). These symptoms can also occur in people who have other conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis), coeliac disease and bowel cancer. If you think you have IBS it is important to rule out other causes for your symptoms first, so please see your doctor for medical advice.

Dietary changes can significantly improve IBS symptoms. This booklet explains how a low FODMAP diet can help in managing the condition.

Typical symptoms

- Abdominal pain
- Bloating or distension
- Wind or flatulence
- Change in bowel habit (diarrhoea and/or constipation)

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

The cause of IBS is not fully understood. Symptoms can affect your quality of life and they can come and go without explanation. In particular, a hectic lifestyle, anxiety and stress can all affect the gut which in turn may increase your symptoms. IBS can be difficult to treat but diet and lifestyle changes can be very helpful to improve symptoms.

Other gut disorders

Sometimes people with other gut disorders (e.g. inflammatory bowel disease) can have IBS-like symptoms. They may benefit from similar diet and lifestyle changes.

Does diet affect symptoms?

It is difficult to perform research into diet for IBS. In the past, various dietary factors have been proposed to be important triggers for IBS symptoms, such as alcohol, caffeine and fatty foods. You may have already been given advice around these foods to attempt to improve your symptoms. Dietary triggers are difficult to identify particularly when you have a flare up of IBS as your gut may be more sensitive to some foods. Recent research has shown that some carbohydrates may contribute to IBS symptoms. These carbohydrates are called **Fermentable, Oligo-saccharides, Di-saccharides, Mono-saccharides And Polyols** or FODMAPs.





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FODMAP research



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