

Overview of the Low-FODMAP Diet

Developed at Monash University in Australia, the Low-FODMAP Diet supports individuals with functional gut disorders by avoiding foods that contain specific types of carbohydrates.

FODMAP stands for **Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides, And Polyols**—specific carbohydrates some individuals cannot efficiently absorb. When they aren't absorbed, certain gut bacteria feed on them, producing byproducts that can lead to gas, bloating, and diarrhea. This can also lead to bacterial overgrowth in the small intestine, contributing to other health problems.

WHAT TO AVOID AND WHAT'S OKAY TO EAT

Foods high in FODMAPs are to be avoided; some examples of high-FODMAP (avoid) and low-FODMAP (permitted) foods follow.

ANIMAL PROTEIN

Meats, poultry, and seafood don't contain carbohydrates, so they aren't high in FODMAPs. However, pay careful attention to how they are prepared and processed—many sauces and side dishes contain ingredients not permitted on this approach.

LEGUMES

Most legumes are moderate-to-high FODMAP foods. Some may be tolerated in reduced serving sizes, but they will likely need to be removed during an initial elimination phase.

DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES — LOW

butter; cheeses 2 oz or less (cottage, feta, ricotta, mozzarella, Swiss); lactose-free milk; rice/oat milk; firm tofu; tempeh

DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES — HIGH

buttermilk, cream cheese, cream, ice cream, milk, sour cream, silken tofu, yogurt

NUTS & SEEDS — LOW

Brazil nuts, chestnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, macadamias, peanuts, pecan halves, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds, walnut halves

NUTS & SEEDS — HIGH

almonds, cashews, coconut, hazelnuts, pistachios, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds

FATS & OILS — LOW

almond oil, avocado oil, butter/ghee, coconut milk & oil, olives, extra-virgin olive oil, rice bran oil, safflower, sesame oil, sunflower oil, walnut oil

FATS & OILS — HIGH

avocado (small amounts), chocolate, soybean oil, salad dressings, sauces with sweeteners or high-FODMAP additives

VEGETABLES — LOW

carrots, chives, eggplant, green beans, kale, potato

VEGETABLES — HIGH

artichoke, asparagus, garlic, many legumes (beans), mushrooms, onions, soybeans

FRUITS — LOW

blueberries, cantaloupe, kiwi, lemon, oranges, raw pineapple

FRUITS — HIGH

apples, blackberries, cherries, mango, pear, watermelon

SWEETENERS — LOW

glucose, maple syrup, sucrose (table sugar)

SWEETENERS — HIGH

agave, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, sugar alcohols (maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol)

Why are some sweeteners allowed? It comes down to absorption. Glucose is easily absorbed by most people; other sweeteners contain carbohydrates that aren't. Symptoms can occur when a food has more fructose than glucose—which is why some fruits are included and others are not.

Flavors. A challenge of this diet is the restriction on garlic and onions. FODMAPs aren't soluble in oil, so garlic and onions can be sautéed about 5 minutes in olive oil and then discarded—the flavored oil can season dishes without the parts that cause symptoms. The green parts of scallions, chives, and most spices (salt, pepper, chile) are also safe.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE LOW-FODMAP DIET

- Print this handout of high- and low-FODMAP foods.
- Visit Monash University's FODMAP website for more extensive information and food lists.
- Organize your kitchen—identify foods to eliminate, and stock up on low-FODMAP foods.
- Pick a day to start. The program is typically done in three phases:

1. Elimination: Remove all high-FODMAP foods for 4–6 weeks. If FODMAPs are the issue, symptoms should improve significantly during this time.

2. Reintroduction: Return to your provider to evaluate results. If you had a positive response, reintroduce FODMAPs slowly and specifically—one at a time—while monitoring for returning symptoms.

3. Maintenance: Design a long-term plan with your provider that adds back tolerated foods (in quality and quantity) and continues avoiding foods that cause symptoms.

The Low-FODMAP Diet was developed by researchers at Monash University. This food plan is best followed under the supervision of a healthcare professional experienced in this specialized area.