An Introduction to the Low FODMAP Diet for Irritable Bowel Syndrome

The following information provides an introduction to the low FODMAP diet for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). It is not intended to replace counselling by a Registered Dietitian on the low FODMAP diet approach for IBS symptom management. Registered Dietitians who are experienced or trained in the low FODMAP diet approach can individualize the low FODMAP diet to help achieve best results and ensure your diet is nutritionally adequate.

What is the low FODMAP diet?

The low FODMAP diet is a diet that limits foods that are high in **FODMAPs**. FODMAPs are carbohydrates found in food that are highly fermentable. The fermentation of FODMAPs by bacteria in the bowel (known as the production of gas) is a normal part of digestion. For people with IBS however, the increased production of gas that can occur with eating foods high in FODMAPs may provoke symptoms such as excess gas, abdominal bloating and distention, and abdominal discomfort. Some FODMAPs can also cause loading of water in the bowel when consumed in larger amounts. Loading of water in the bowel may also provoke IBS symptoms in some people, including bowel urgency and diarrhea. Reducing the amount of high FODMAP foods in the diet is an approach that can help improve IBS symptoms for some people.

Can following a low FODMAP diet cure my IBS?

While following a low FODMAP diet may improve your symptoms, this diet is not considered a cure for IBS. FODMAPs can increase IBS symptoms temporarily when consumed due to the increase in gas production and water loading in the bowel. Research to date has found that about 3 out of 4 people with IBS can experience a meaningful overall improvement in their symptoms when following a low FODMAP diet.

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What are examples of FODMAPs?

There are 5 types of carbohydrates that are considered FODMAPs. These are:

- **Lactose**
- **Fructose**
- **Fructans**
- **GOS (galacto-oligosaccharides)**
- **Polyols**

Tolerance of FODMAPs and IBS

Tolerance of foods that are high in FODMAPs can vary for people with IBS. Some people with IBS can tolerate a larger amount of food high in FODMAPs in their diet, while others may find that consuming a smaller amount of food high in FODMAPs can provoke symptoms.

Tolerance of one FODMAP in particular, lactose, can vary depending on your ability to absorb this carbohydrate. Lactose can often cause symptoms for people with IBS if it is poorly absorbed in the digestive system. This is referred to as *lactose malabsorption*. Lactose malabsorption occurs in about 40% of people with IBS. For people that do not have lactose malabsorption, this carbohydrate is more likely to be tolerated.

To help illustrate the effect of consuming FODMAPs when you have IBS, you can think of your digestive system as a 'cup' (Figure 1.). All the FODMAPs you consume from different foods go into this same cup. As you consume FODMAPs they have a cumulative effect, meaning they all contribute to the total FODMAP load in this cup. If you consume too high of a FODMAP load, resulting in too much gas production and water loading, your cup can overflow and symptoms can occur (Figure 2). Different people with IBS can have different sized cups. One person's cup may overflow if they consume a small amount of FODMAPs, whereas another person's cup may not overflow until they consume a larger amount of FODMAPs. If FODMAPs do provoke your IBS symptoms, it can be a learning process to determine what your tolerance level is (i.e. at what point your cup overflows) when consuming high FODMAP foods.

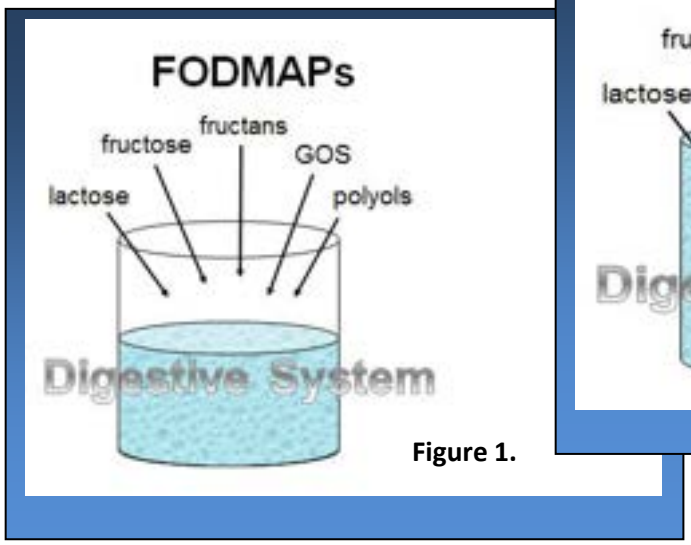


Figure 1.

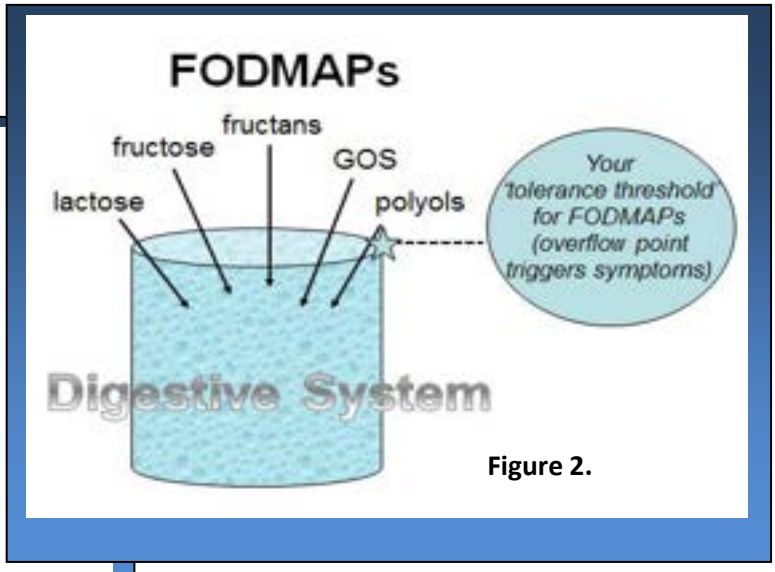


Figure 2.

The low FODMAP diet

A table has been provided that lists foods that are high in FODMAPs and foods that are low in FODMAPs.

As a trial, you can try choosing low FODMAP foods while limiting or avoiding high FODMAP foods for 4 weeks to see if your IBS symptoms improve. Some symptom improvement may be seen within a week of following a low FODMAP diet, although it may take up to a few weeks of following this diet to see the full benefit for some people. In some cases, IBS symptoms may not improve significantly on the low FODMAP diet (i.e. approx. 1 out of 4 people with IBS see limited or no improvement with a low FODMAP diet).

Some foods listed under 'High FODMAP' are marked with an 'L'. These are foods that are high in lactose. If you have had a negative test result for lactose malabsorption or if you already know that you can tolerate lactose in your diet, then these foods generally do not need to be limited on the low FODMAP diet.

Some foods listed under 'Low FODMAP' are marked with the symbol , which represents a magnifying glass. These foods can sometimes contain high FODMAP ingredients that have been added to the food product. The magnifying glass symbol is a reminder for you to check

the ingredient list of these food products before consuming them to confirm whether any high FODMAP ingredients have been added to the product.

Some foods listed under 'Low FODMAP' are marked with an 'M'. These are foods that can have a moderate amount of FODMAPs (slightly higher than low FODMAP foods) but that are still often reported to be tolerated. If you notice that any of these foods cause symptoms however, try reducing them to a smaller portion size (1/2 portion size) to improve tolerance.

While you follow the low FODMAP diet, it is important that you continue to consume a nutritionally balanced diet. See Canada's Food Guide (www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) for information on how to follow a balanced diet

Food Type	Low FODMAP *Choose*	High FODMAP *Limit*
Fruits 	*Limit large servings of fruit. It is recommended to limit low FODMAP fruit to 1 serving at a time and separate each fruit serving by at least 2 hours. One fruit serving equals 1 small/medium sized fruit or 1/2 cup.* *Limit dried low FODMAP fruit, and concentrated fruit products. If you consume juice from low FODMAP fruit, it is recommended you limit the serving size to 1/3 cup.* ✓ banana ✓ blueberries [M] ✓ cantaloupe ✓ cranberries ✓ dragon fruit ✓ durian ✓ grapefruit [M] ✓ grapes* ✓ honeydew melon ✓ kiwi ✓ lemon ✓ lime ✓ longan [M] ✓ mandarin ✓ orange ✓ papaya	× apple × apricot × avocado × blackberries × canned packing juice × cherries × dates × dried high FODMAP fruit × dried high FODMAP fruit bars × figs, dried × lychee × mango × nectarine × peach × pear × persimmon × plum × pomegranate × prune × watermelon

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
	✓ rambutan [M] ✓ passion fruit ✓ pineapple ✓ raspberries* ✓ rhubarb ✓ strawberry* ** There is some conflicting data on FODMAP content – limit quantity or avoid if these foods cause symptoms.*	
Vegetables 	✓ alfalfa ✓ bean sprouts ✓ bok choy ✓ butternut squash [M] ✓ carrots ✓ chicory leaves ✓ chives ✓ choy sum ✓ collard greens ✓ cucumbers ✓ eggplant ✓ endive, leaves ✓ fennel (bulb, leaves) ✓ green beans ✓ green bell pepper ✓ kale ✓ kambucha squash ✓ leek leaves *(leek bulb is high in FODMAPs)* ✓ lettuce (all types) ✓ okra ✓ parsnip ✓ potatoes ✓ pumpkin [M]	× artichoke × asparagus × beetroot × broccoli × Brussels sprouts × cabbage × cauliflower × celery × garlic *(garlic-infused vegetable oil may be tolerated)* × leeks (whole or bulb) × mushrooms × onions × peas × shallots × snow peas × sugar snap peas × tomato (e.g. pasta) sauce

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
	✓ radish ✓ red bell pepper ✓ red chilli ✓ seaweed, Nori ✓ spinach ✓ spring onion greens *(spring onion bulb is high in FODMAPs)* ✓ sweet potato M ✓ swiss chard (silver beet) ✓ tomato, tomato paste *(tomato sauce is high in FODMAPs)* ✓ turnip ✓ water chestnut ✓ zucchini	
Grain Products 	✓ amaranth flour* ✓ arrowroot flour* ✓ field corn (e.g. corn meal, corn thins, corn flour, corn tortilla chips, corn tacos, corn puffs, corn polenta) *(sweet corn is high in FODMAPs)* ✓ oats M , oatmeal M, oat bran ✓ millet*, millet flour*, puffed millet* ✓ quinoa, puffed quinoa ✓ rice, rice cakes, rice crackers and crisps, Rice Krispies, rice pasta/noodles, cream of rice cereal, rice paper, puffed rice, rice flour, rice bran ✓ tapioca*	× muesli/muesli bar × rye flour*, rye bread × sweet corn (e.g. corn on the cob, raw or cooked corn kernels) *(products made from field corn are allowed)* × wheat*, products made with significant amounts of wheat flour. For example: ▪ breads ▪ pasta/noodles ▪ couscous ▪ cereals ▪ cakes, baked goods, pastries, cookies ▪ crackers, biscuits ▪ breadcrumbs, batter

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
	** Although the FODMAP content is not yet available for these specific grain products (amaranth, arrowroot, millet, tapioca) these can be included on the low FODMAP diet unless you notice tolerance issues*	** Small/trace amounts of wheat or rye in food products can likely be tolerated*
Milk and Alternatives 	✓ almond milk beverage [M] ✓ butter ✓ certain cheeses only (Cheddar, Edam, Limburger, Mozzarella, Romano, Swiss, Parmesan, Provolone, Brie, and Camembert) ✓ coconut milk ✓ coconut milk beverage *(coconut water is high in FODMAPs)* ✓ custards and puddings made with lactose-free milk ✓ ice cream substitutes (e.g. dairy-free gelato, sorbet) ✓ lactose-free milk ✓ lactose-free yogurt ✓ rice milk beverage	× buttermilk [L] × cream (light cream, half and half, whipping cream) [L] × cream sauces [L] × cream soups [L] × evaporated milk [L] × Feta cheese [L] × fresh cheeses (e.g. Ricotta, Cottage) [L] × ice cream [L] × kefir [L] × malted milk [L] × whey powder [L] × processed cheese, cheese spreads [L] × puddings, custards [L] × regular and low-fat milk (cow, goat, sheep) [L] × regular and low-fat yogurt [L] × sherbet [L] × skim milk powder [L] × sour cream [L] × soy milk × sweetened condensed milk [L]

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
Meat and Alternatives 	✓ eggs ✓ fish ✓ low FODMAP nuts *(limit portion to small handful at a time)*: • almonds [M] • Brazil nuts • hazelnuts [M] • pine nuts • peanuts • pecans • macadamia nuts • walnuts ✓ peanut butter *(limit portion to 1-2 tbsp at a time)* ✓ plain rice protein powder ✓ poultry (chicken, turkey) ✓ red meat ✓ seafood ✓ seed butters (e.g. sunflower seed butter, pumpkin seed butter) *(limit portion to 1-2 tbsp at a time)* ✓ seeds (e.g. sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, chia seeds) (*limit portion to a small handful at a time)* ✓ tempeh ✓ tofu ✓ 100% whey protein isolate	× legumes (e.g. chick peas, lentils, red kidney beans, baked beans, navy beans, lima beans, butter beans, borlotti beans, mixed beans, split peas, soy beans) × pistachio nuts × cashews

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
Oils and Fats 	✓ all vegetable oils (including soybean oil) ✓ flavoured vegetable oils (e.g. garlic-infused vegetable oil, chili-infused vegetable oil) ✓ butter ✓ margarine ✓ mayonnaise	× cream cheese [L] × cream sauce [L] × sour cream [L] *Caution (check ingredients):* commercial salad dressings often contain ingredients that are high in FODMAPs (e.g. garlic, onion)
Sweeteners 	✓ artificial sweeteners not ending in 'ol' (e.g. aspartame, Splenda) ✓ glucose ✓ golden syrup ✓ maple syrup ✓ molasses [M] ✓ regular corn syrup ✓ rice syrup ✓ table sugar (sucrose) *The following are different names of low FODMAP sugars:* • beet sugar • brown sugar • cane sugar • castor sugar • confectioner's sugar • granulated sugar • icing sugar • invert sugar • palm sugar • refined sugar	× agave syrup × crystalline fructose × fructose × glucose-fructose, glucose/fructose *(this is high fructose corn syrup)* × high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) × honey × polyols (e.g. sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol and isomalt) *Caution (check ingredients):* sugar-free products (e.g. sugar-free gum) may contain added polyols

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
	• sugar • turbinado sugar *Use low FODMAP sugars in moderation*	*Caution (check ingredients):* the following may contain added glucose-fructose (high fructose corn syrup): - soft drinks - fruit drinks - sweetened beverages - candies - sweetened cereals - syrups - condiments - sweetened snack products
Herbs, Spices and Condiments 	✓ chives ✓ ginger root ✓ salt ✓ pepper ✓ lemon and lime juice ✓ soy sauce ✓ fish sauce ✓ mustard ✓ oyster sauce ✓ plum sauce [M] ✓ vanilla extract, real or imitation ✓ most varieties of vinegars (including filtered apple cider vinegar) *The following spices are low in FODMAPs, but use caution with large amounts of spices:* ✓ cinnamon	× barbeque sauce × chutney × garlic salt or powder × hummus × ketchup × onion salt or powder × relish × unfiltered apple cider vinegar

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
	✓ green leafy herbs (e.g. fresh or dried basil, parsley, oregano, cilantro, coriander, dill, marjoram, thyme, tarragon, rosemary, mint) ✓ ground chilli powder ✓ paprika ✓ seed spices (e.g. coriander, mustard, cumin, caraway, dill seed, celery, sesame seed, poppy seed, nutmeg) ✓ turmeric	
Other Food Ingredients	✓ cocoa powder ✓ soy lecithin ✓ ingredients not listed or derived from foods listed under 'High FODMAP'	× carob powder × chickpea flour × chicory root extract (also known as 'inulin') × curds [L] × FOS (fructo-oligosaccharides) × fruit juice concentrate (e.g. concentrated apple juice, concentrated pear juice) × GOS (galacto-oligosaccharides) × inulin × lactose [L] × lentil flour × milk solids [L] × pea flour × soy or soybean powder *(soy lecithin and soybean oil are allowed)* × textured soy protein

	Low FODMAP	High FODMAP
Other	• beer • brewed and instant regular and decaffeinated coffee or espresso • black tea • chai tea [M] • dandelion tea [M] • green tea • white tea • peppermint tea • unsweetened spirits (vodka, gin, whiskey) • red and white wine (dry) • rose wine • sherry (dry) • water	× chamomile tea × coconut water *(coconut milk/coconut milk beverage is allowed)* × fennel tea × fortified wine: port, sherry (sweet) × oolong tea × rum × some alcoholic cocktails (pina colada, margaritas, sours) × white wine (sweet, dessert)

Nutrient data used to classify foods in the FODMAP food table was obtained from published studies, USDA nutrient database and the NUTTAB database. In some cases, FODMAP composition data was not available. In these cases, foods were classified based on estimates from the Low FODMAP diet education resources prepared by the research team in the Dept. of Gastroenterology, Central Clinical School, Monash University, Australia (booklet, Smartphone application, website blog). FODMAP classification of some foods may vary with other educational resources related to factors such as variance in FODMAP composition data of foods, portion size standards of foods, clinical experience.

Reading food labels

The following is a quick reference list that can be used when reading food labels to help you identify common added ingredients and sweeteners that are high in FODMAPs.

Quick reference list of high FODMAP ingredients and sweeteners

- agave syrup
- apple purée [T]
- buttermilk [L, T]
- carob
- canned packing juice from high FODMAP fruits [T]
- chickpea flour [T]
- chicory root extract (also labelled as 'inulin')
- cream
- crystalline fructose
- curds [L, T]
- FOS (fructo-oligosaccharides)
- fructose
- fruit juice concentrate (e.g. concentrated apple juice, concentrated pear juice) [T]
- garlic salt or powder
- glucose-fructose or glucose/fructose (term often used in Canada for high fructose corn syrup)
- GOS (galacto-oligosaccharides)
- high fructose corn syrup
- honey
- inulin (fibre that is added to some products)
- isomalt
- lactitol
- lactose [L]
- lentil flour [T]
- maltitol
- mannitol
- milk solids [L]
- onion salt or powder
- pea flour [T]
- pear purée [T]
- rye flour [T]
- sorbitol
- soy or soybean flour [T] (note: soy lecithin and soybean oil are low in FODMAPs)
- soy milk [T]
- skim milk powder [L]

Quick reference list of high FODMAP ingredients and sweeteners

- textured soy protein [T]
- unfiltered apple cider vinegar [T] (note: regular/filtered apple cider vinegar is low in FODMAPs)
- wheat [T]
- whey or whey protein [L] (note: '100% whey protein isolate' is low in FODMAPs)
- xylitol

[L] *If you do not have lactose malabsorption or if you know you can tolerate lactose, these ingredients do not need to be limited*

[T] *These high FODMAP ingredients can be tolerated by most people with IBS when present in a very small or trace amount (less than 1 tablespoon)*

Pinterest Website

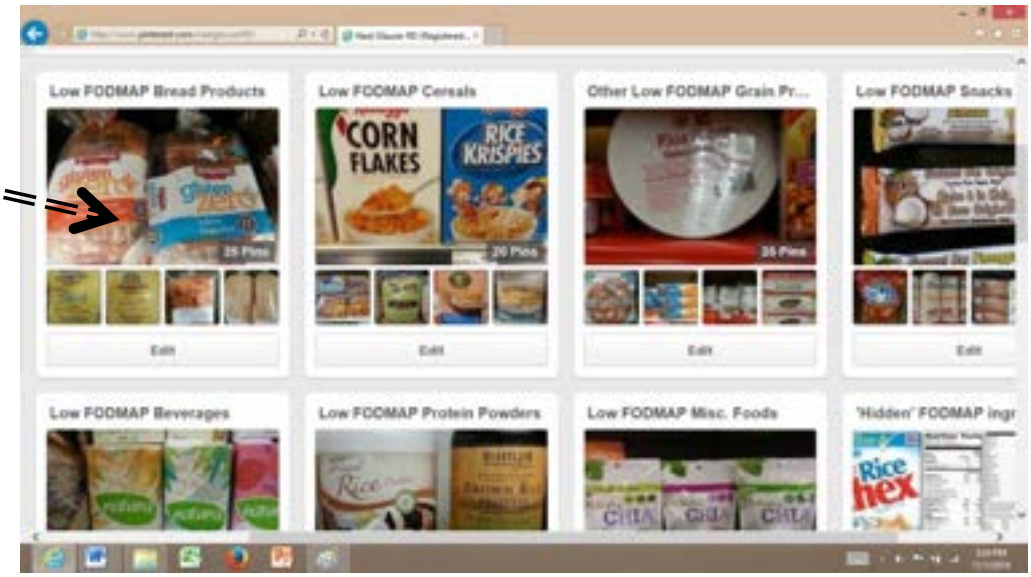
A Pinterest website has been created to help you if you are trying a low FODMAP diet.

Website address: **pinterest.com/nealglauserRD** *(enter this address in your internet website address bar to visit this Pinterest website)*

This Pinterest website provides you with:

- ✓ ***Tips for low FODMAP shopping.*** As well as some general shopping tips, this Pinterest website can help you locate where to purchase low FODMAP foods in the Niagara region.

Click on a Food Products category for product information

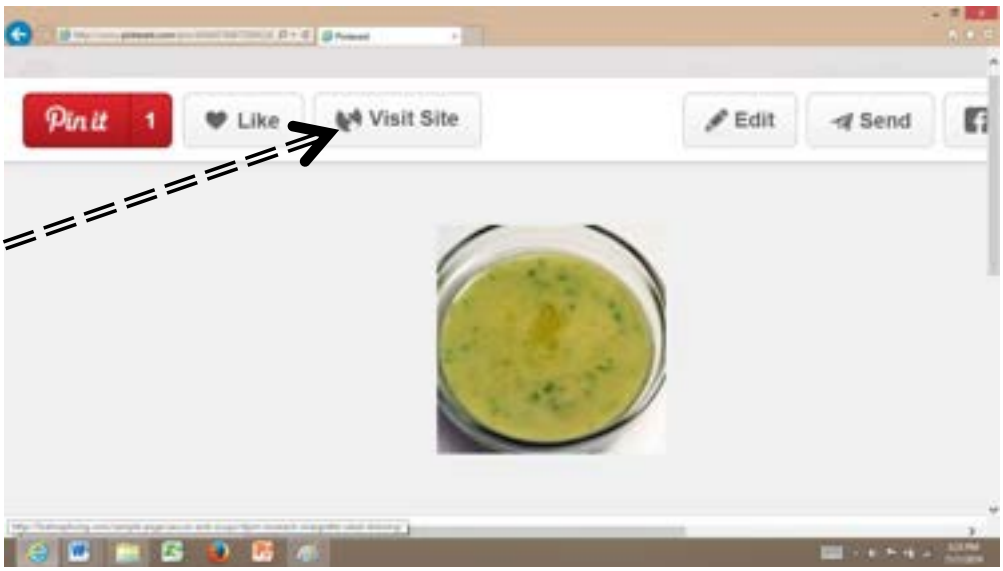


- ✓ ***Tips on label reading for FODMAPs***. This Pinterest website helps identify some foods that have 'hidden' FODMAP ingredients.
- ✓ ***Online low FODMAP recipe links***. If you are looking for low FODMAP recipes for meals, desserts, snacks and condiments/sauces, this is a good place to get ideas.

  Note: if you search the internet (e.g. 'Google') you can find many recipes online that are labelled as low in FODMAPs. Some of these recipes may be outdated or inaccurate

however (may include high FODMAP ingredients). The low FODMAP recipes on this Pinterest website (**pinterest.com/nealglauserRD**) have been confirmed to be low in high FODMAP ingredients by a dietitian. If you use online recipes labelled as low in FODMAPs that are not from this Pinterest website, it is good idea to double-check the recipes to confirm they do not contain any high FODMAP ingredients.

After you click on a recipe picture, click on the 'Visit Site' button to take you to the website with the recipe



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Low FODMAP sample menus

A week of low FODMAP menus have been provided to help you plan meals and snacks while trying a low FODMAP diet.

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Rice Krispies cereal with almond or rice milk topped with banana slices

1 - 2 hard-boiled eggs
(add margarine, salt and pepper if desired)

Lunch

Tuna salad sandwich melt open-face on plain rice cakes or low FODMAP bread (mix tuna, mayonnaise, chopped green peppers and radishes, salt, pepper; spread on rice cakes/low FODMAP bread; then melt cheddar cheese on top)

Lactose-free yogurt

Afternoon snack

½ cup grapes

Rice or almond milk

Supper

Stir-fry
[1 cup of cooked quinoa (or rice), sliced chicken or turkey, low FODMAP vegetables, olive oil (use garlic-infused oil if desired), herbs or soy sauce as desired to flavour]

Evening snack

Small handful of walnuts

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Oatmeal with rice or almond milk
(add maple syrup as sweetener if desired)

½ cup cantaloupe or raspberries

Lunch

Corn or rice pasta with cooked low FODMAP vegetables and cooked shrimp,

tossed in olive oil, parmesan cheese, and herbs or lemon juice

Afternoon snack

Small banana with peanut butter (can sprinkle on shredded coconut if desired)

Supper

Tomato chicken risotto
(recipe at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Rice or almond milk

Evening snack

Rice crackers/crisps with cheddar cheese

.

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Corn flakes with rice or almond milk

Orange wedges

Lunch

Salmon or chicken salad sandwich on low FODMAP bread
(mix salmon or chicken with mayonnaise, red bell peppers, salt, pepper; top with sliced tomatoes and lettuce)

Lactose-free yogurt

Afternoon snack

½ cup pineapple

Small handful of sunflower seeds

Supper

Baked turkey breast seasoned with herbs served with oven-roasted red and green bell peppers, and zucchini tossed in garlic-infused olive oil and herbs

Mashed potatoes with margarine
(add chives if desired)

Rice or almond milk

Evening snack

Rice cakes with low FODMAP dip
(dip recipes at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Egg omelet made with tomatoes, spinach and herbs
(add cheddar cheese if desired)

Hash brown potatoes

½ cup papaya or grapes

Lunch

Low FODMAP quinoa and vegetable salad
(recipe at: pinterest.com/nealglauserRD)

Rice crackers/crisps

Rice or almond milk

Afternoon snack

Small handful of pecans with brie cheese

Supper

Corn or rice pasta served with pan-fried chicken and low FODMAP vegetables
(season with olive oil and herbs)

Rice or almond milk

Evening snack

Plain corn tortilla chips with low FODMAP salsa
(salsa recipes at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Banana oatmeal shake
(mix in the blender: 1 banana, 1/2 cup cooked oatmeal, 2 tbsp pecans or walnuts, 1/2 cup almond or rice milk beverage, pinch of cinnamon, 2 - 4 ice cubes)

Lunch

Tossed spinach salad with low FODMAP vegetables, shrimp or tuna, and homemade salad dressing
(salad dressing recipes at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Low FODMAP toast with margarine

Rice or almond milk

Afternoon snack

Blueberries in a bowl topped with coconut milk beverage

Supper

Barbeque chicken kabobs (can marinade with olive oil and lemon juice if desired) with low FODMAP vegetables on a bed of rice

Evening snack

Frozen dairy-free sorbet

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Rice porridge mixed with blueberries and coconut milk beverage
(add maple syrup as sweetener if desired)

Lunch

Low FODMAP potato salad
(recipe at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Carrot and cucumber sticks

Lactose-free yogurt

Afternoon snack

Small banana with peanut butter or sunflower seed butter

Supper

Baked tilapia or salmon with oven-roasted small potatoes and carrots
(season with olive oil and herbs)

Rice or almond milk

Evening snack

Rice crackers/crisps with Swiss or cheddar cheese

Low FODMAP Menu

Breakfast

Low FODMAP pancakes with maple syrup
(recipes at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')

Lunch

Roast beef or sliced meat sandwich on low FODMAP bread with mayonnaise and lettuce

1 - 2 kiwi fruits

Rice or almond milk

Afternoon snack

A small handful of walnuts with cheddar cheese

Supper

Your choice (visit: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD' for different supper recipe ideas)

Evening snack

Peanut butter banana shake
(mix in blender: 1 cup almond or rice milk, 1 banana, 1 tbsp peanut butter, 2 - 4 ice cubes)

Quick snack ideas for the FODMAP elimination diet

- ✓ *Banana with peanut butter*
- ✓ *Bowl of raspberries or blueberries with rice or almond milk*
- ✓ *Carrot sticks (can dip in peanut butter)*
- ✓ *Corn flakes or Rice Krispies with rice or almond milk*
- ✓ *Corn puffs*
- ✓ *Dairy-free sorbet*
- ✓ *Fruit (low FODMAP choices)*
- ✓ *Hard-boiled egg*
- ✓ *Lactose-free yogurt (can add in low FODMAP fruit)*
- ✓ *Low lactose cheeses (those listed under 'Low FOMAP')*
- ✓ *Plain banana chips (portion: handful only)*
- ✓ *Plain corn tortilla chips*
- ✓ *Peanut butter spread on rice cakes (can top with sliced banana)*
- ✓ *Rice cakes topped with sliced tomatoes and melted cheddar cheese*
- ✓ *Rice cakes with low FODMAP dip (dip recipes at: 'pinterest.com/nealglauserRD')*
- ✓ *Rice crackers/crisps and low FODMAP fruit*
- ✓ *Rice crackers/crisps with cheddar cheese slices*
- ✓ *Sesame snaps*
- ✓ *Sliced egg on low FODMAP toast with margarine*
- ✓ *Sliced red or green bell peppers or cucumbers*
- ✓ *Small handful of low FODMAP nuts (e.g. peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, macadamia nuts, Brazil nuts)*
- ✓ *Small handful of sunflower seeds*
- ✓ *Smoothie (mix in blender: almond or rice milk with low FODMAP fruit)*

Other foods that may trigger IBS symptoms

In addition to high FODMAP foods, other dietary triggers of IBS symptoms can include caffeine, alcohol, greasy foods (e.g. deep-fried foods, fast foods) and large meals. You may also want to try limiting these foods to help improve your IBS symptoms.






Evaluating your symptom response to the low FODMAP diet

No symptom improvement

If you followed a low FODMAP diet for 4 weeks and your IBS symptoms did not significantly improve, then this diet may not be effective for you. Keep in mind that FODMAPs are not harmful to the digestive system, rather they can simply provoke symptoms temporarily for some people with IBS due to increased gas production or fluid loading in the bowel. If limiting high FODMAP foods did not provide meaningful improvement in your symptoms, and you find re-introducing high FODMAP foods back into your diet does not provoke symptoms, then there is no need to restrict these foods in your diet and it is suggested that you resume your regular diet as tolerated. Many high FODMAP foods are healthy food choices and they are encouraged in the diet if they are well tolerated. A consultation with a dietitian can help you determine if there are other dietary strategies that may improve your IBS symptoms.

Symptom improvement

If you notice a significant improvement in your IBS symptoms after following a low FODMAP diet for 4 weeks, it is recommended that you seek a referral with a dietitian experienced or trained in the low FODMAP diet approach for further counselling. A strict low FODMAP diet (sometimes referred to as 'the FODMAP elimination diet') is typically used for only 4 - 8 weeks

to determine if this diet approach will be effective for symptom management, and is not considered a long-term diet for most people. The overall goal of the low FODMAP diet approach is to still include some high FODMAP foods in your diet as you can tolerate them. Adding high FODMAP foods back into your diet that you can tolerate can help to liberalize your diet, which is important for quality of life and ensuring your diet is nutritionally balanced.

Working with a dietitian that is experienced or trained in the low FODMAP diet approach can help you determine which FODMAPs are most problematic, help you re-introduce FODMAPs to increase the variety of foods in your diet, and also ensure that your diet is nutritionally adequate.

In the meantime, while you are waiting for the dietitian appointment, have you noticed whether certain high FODMAP foods appear to trigger your IBS symptoms more than others? If you suspect certain high FODMAP foods are better tolerated, try adding these back into your diet gradually to see how you tolerate them.