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HERITAGE VALLEY
HEALTH SYSTEM

Sharon R. Roseman, MD, FACP

Practice Limited to Gastroenterology

701 Broad Street, Suite 411

Sewickley, PA 15143

PH: 412-749-7160

FAX: 412-749-7388

FODMAPs and IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

Researchers from Australia have come up with a novel approach for dietary treatment of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). This involves following a low FODMAP diet. The term FODMAP describes a collection of short-chain carbohydrates found in many common foods. FODMAPs stands for Fermentable Oligo-, Di- and Mono-saccharides, and Polyols. This includes fruits with high fructose contents such as apples, pears and watermelon and foods with sorbitol and lactose. Vegetables high in fructan including onions, leeks, asparagus, artichokes, wheat based products such as bread, pasta, cereal, cake, biscuits and raffinose-containing foods including legumes, lentils, cabbage, brussel sprouts are all high in FODMAPs.

The FODMAP theory holds that consuming foods high in FODMAPs results in increased volume of liquid and gas in the small and large intestine, resulting in distention and symptoms such as abdominal pain and gas and bloating. The theory proposes that following a low FODMAP diet should result in a decrease in digestive symptoms. The theory further holds that there is a cumulative effect of these foods on symptoms. In other words, eating foods with varying FODMAP values at the same time will add up, resulting in symptoms that you might not experience if you ate the food by itself. This might explain the mixed results of studies that have evaluated the effects of fructose and lactose, two types of carbohydrates, on IBS. Ongoing research is being conducted as to the accuracy of the FODMAP theory and the effectiveness of the diet for IBS.

Below you will find lists of common high and low FODMAP foods. Working with a trained dietician can also help to ensure that you receive adequate and balanced nutrition including a healthy intake of dietary fiber.

Common High FODMAP Foods:

Fruits

Apples
Apricots
Cherries
Mango
Pears
Nectarines
Peaches
Pears
Plums and prunes
Watermelon

High concentration of fructose from
canned fruit, dried fruit or fruit juice

Legumes

Baked beans
Chickpeas
Lentils
Kidney beans

Grains

Rye
Wheat

Lactose-Containing Foods

Custard
Ice cream
Margarine
Milk
(cow, goat, sheep)
Soft cheese, including cottage cheese
and ricotta
Yogurt

Sweeteners

Fructose
High fructose corn syrup
Isomalt
Maltitol
Mannitol
Sorbitol
Xylitol

Vegetables

Artichokes
Asparagus
Avocado
Beets
Broccoli
Brussel sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Garlic
(with large consumption)
Fennel
Leeks
Mushrooms
Okra
Onions
Peas
Radicchio lettuce
Scallions
(white parts)
Shallots
Sugar snap peas
Snow peas

Common Low FODMAP Foods:

Fruits

Banana
Blueberry
Grapefruit
Grapes
Honeydew melon
Kiwi
Lemon
Lime
Mandarine oranges
Orange
Raspberry
Strawberry

Grains

Gluten-free products
Spelt products

Lactose Alternatives

Butter
Hard cheese, brie and camembert
Lactose-free products, such as lactose-
free ice cream and yogurt
Gelato
Rice milk
Sorbet

Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners
(that do not end in "-ol")
Glucose
Maple syrup
Sugar (sucrose)

Vegetables

Bok choy
Carrots
Celery
Corn
Eggplant
Green beans
Lettuce
Parsnip
Scallions
(green parts only)
Tomato