

UNDERSTANDING THE LOW-FODMAP DIET

The term FODMAP is an acronym created from the names of different types of fermentable carbohydrates, which are found naturally and plentifully in many foods.



For many with gastrointestinal disorders, these short-chain carbohydrates can be poorly absorbed in the small intestine and **can trigger abdominal stress** and cause symptoms such as bloating, gas, abdominal pain and discomfort, diarrhea and constipation. Based on research around the effects of consuming these FODMAPs, the low-FODMAP diet was developed to determine if avoiding certain foods might alleviate abdominal symptoms in people who have gastrointestinal sensitivities or disorders, most commonly irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). IBS is a common disorder that affects one in seven people. A low-FODMAP diet can be used as part of the first-line approach to treating IBS.

LOW-FODMAP DIET 101

It is important to note that a low-FODMAP diet is not a lifetime diet. It is a trial diet **intended to help identify FODMAP-containing foods** which may be the cause of gastrointestinal discomfort. The trial should be supervised by an experienced registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) who can help navigate the complexities of the diet and based on the trial results, individualize a long-term eating plan. Once symptom-triggering FODMAPs are identified, people can typically go back to eating the rest of their usual foods.

The diet progresses in three phases. The ultimate goal is for someone to identify symptom-triggering FODMAP foods and to understand how much of the food they can eat without discomfort.

F

Fermentable

O

Oligosaccharides
(fructans and GOS)

D

Disaccharides
(lactose)

M

Monosaccharides
(fructose)

A

and

P

Polyols
(sugar alcohols, such as sorbitol and mannitol)

PHASE 1 LOW-FODMAP DIET

Initiating the diet requires a complete elimination of all high-FODMAP foods for two to six weeks. It is not intended to be a long-term approach to eating.

PHASE 2 RE-CHALLENGE

The second phase gradually reintroduces FODMAPs back into the diet, one FODMAP group at a time. This careful process helps identify which specific FODMAP foods are causing symptoms and which are not.

PHASE 3 ADAPTED DIET

Once reintroduction of all FODMAPs is complete, the results help determine a long-term eating plan. FODMAP foods that trigger symptoms may need to be completely avoided or eaten in smaller quantities, while others can be included in the diet. A person's reaction to certain foods can change over time, so it is best to work with your RDN to continue navigating this eating plan as needed.



WHAT TO EAT ON A LOW-FODMAP DIET

Identifying which foods are considered high- and low-FODMAP foods can be complicated, and as the research on FODMAPs evolves, so does the list of foods under each category. It is important to be equipped with the best resources to accurately follow the diet plan, and there are numerous online food lists and useful mobile apps to help make it easier! Use these tools to help grocery shop and prep for meals, paying close attention to ingredient lists on packaged food and restaurant menus to watch out for high-FODMAP ingredients.

HOW ALMONDS FIT

While trying to keep track of what works and what doesn't within a low-FODMAP diet, one thing is certain: almonds fit! Almonds are among the nuts that are allowed on the low-FODMAP diet, when keeping to a **portion size of 10 almonds per meal or snack**. They're a convenient snack to keep on hand in case you find yourself in a situation with limited acceptable snack options. **Almond butter is also an acceptable low-FODMAP food**, if you stick to one tablespoon per meal or snack.

Almond milk is also a go-to with the low-FODMAP diet and a great beverage option while avoiding lactose. Available sweetened or unsweetened, plain or flavored, there's an almond milk for everyone. Just be sure to check the ingredient list to ensure your favorite brand is compliant with the diet. Almond milk can easily be made at home, if preferred.

LOW-FODMAP ALMOND OPTIONS PER MEAL



1 tablespoon
almond butter



almond milk
in place of dairy

10 almonds

