

MEN'S FITNESS®

October 2014 Issue

WHAT THE HELL ARE FODMAPS?

Five things we learned about the gluten-free-like diet.

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Is it gluten or FODMAPs making you feel like crap? Perhaps it's a little of both. But wait, what's a **FODMAP**?

FODMAP is an acronym referring to fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols. In short, they're foods containing sugars, starches, and fibers that some people cannot fully **digest** and absorb. But FODMAPS aren't just found in grain-based foods such as wheat, barley, and rye—the main culprits when it comes to gluten sensitivity and celiac disease. FODMAPS are also in foods like mushrooms, stone fruits (peaches, plums, cherries), garlic, and **onions**.

“FODMAPS are like fast food for gut bacteria,” says Kate Scarlata, R.D., an expert on the FODMAP diet and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Well with IBS*. “FODMAPs also pull water into the intestine, which can lead to cramping and/or diarrhea.”

If you've suffered from some of these gastrointestinal symptoms, there's a **possibility** that you're intolerant to gluten, or it may just be a few FODMAPs wreaking havoc on your gut. There's a fine line between the two. If you're not sure, here's a look at what to eat, what not to eat, the gluten-FODMAP link, and where fiber fits into all of it.

Gluten vs. FODMAP

Most people who benefit from a gluten-free diet are likely **sensitive** to a specific kind of carbohydrate, or fructan, which are found specifically in wheat—not the gluten protein. These carbs, or FODMAPS, often cause the gas, diarrhea, and other symptoms that can knock you out of commission and lead to irritable bowel syndrome or other gastrointestinal issues.

A low-FODMAP diet is most similar to a gluten-free one, but has been shown to be more effective than a gluten-free diet in helping to improve gastrointestinal symptoms, specifically in people who aren't **suffering** from celiac disease or those who are sensitive to certain proteins.



Low vs. High FODMAPs

A low-FODMAP diet may reduce symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome or other food sensitivities but can be a **challenge** without the help of a knowledgeable dietitian. As with any diet change, you want to discuss which is most appropriate for you.

"If **digestive** symptoms of bloating and gas are impacting their daily life, speak with a doctor to assess whether a trial of a low-FODMAP diet might help," says Scarlata.

There are hidden FODMAPs in many food products and many nuances with the diet, according to Scarlata, which is why the low-FODMAP diet should be taken on with guidance of a registered dietitian.



Bad (or High) FODMAP Foods

Okay, prepare yourself. You may like some of these **foods**, but keep in mind that they may be what has been getting you sick. Thought chamomile tea was safe? Think again. It's on the list of high-FODMAP foods, which also includes nuts such as pistachios and cashews (other nuts like almonds, peanuts, and walnuts are fine), artichokes, chickpeas, garlic, **lentils**, baked beans, soy beans, and onions; in addition to agave nectar, high fructose corn syrup, and other alternative sweeteners.

Even alcohol is at fault—but only one in particular. Put that rum aside. It's distilled from sugar and can wreak havoc on your stomach if you're FODMAP-sensitive.

Good (or Low) FODMAP Foods

It may seem like a lot of food to cut out, but there are plenty of low-FODMAP foods, too. Most yellow, orange, pink, and purple fruits are in the safe zone, so don't pass up on bananas, **oranges**, blueberries, cantaloupe, coconut, grapes, lemons, limes, papaya, pineapple, raspberries, rhubarb, and strawberries. Unlike the bad



FODMAPS, table sugar and pure organic maple syrup are fine when used as sweeteners. (Also, grab alternative sweeteners that don't end in "ol," which are usually produced from sugar altered with chemicals.)

In addition to the **sweet** stuff, add some substance with rice, potatoes, quinoa, polenta, chicken, fish, shellfish, pork, eggs, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, summer squash, spinach, and eggplant.

If indulging in any libations, wine, beer, vodka, and gin are just fine.

Fiber

When you're following a low-FODMAP eating plan, it's all too easy to cut essential fiber out of your diet. So be vigilant: work **oats**, chia seeds, quinoa, flaxseed, spinach, collards, kale, raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries into your meals and snacks.



See more at: <http://www.mensfitness.com/nutrition/what-to-eat/what-hell-are-fodmaps?page=6#sthash.zQE7etxt.dpuf>