

DO YOU SUFFER FROM CHRONIC BLOATING?



If you are constantly bloated seemingly no matter what you eat, have gas pain and discomfort, and feel like you wake up in the morning with a flat stomach but look preggers by the end of the day, read on!

MY IBS STORY:

As a child I suffered from chronic stomach pains but at the time I did not realize that “stomach” pains actually meant “lower intestinal” pains. After enduring a bunch of medical tests in my teen years, my Doctor told me I had IBS. He also gave me a post-it note – seriously, you can’t make this stuff up – with a short list of foods to avoid: Caffeine, spicy foods, fried foods, chocolate and popcorn. No explanation, no discussion on anything I was eating (and I was eating a LOT of crap) and no advice on anything else that could help. Giving up these foods was difficult for me, I was a teenager after all and my Doctor literally took away my 5 favorite food groups, but I tried for about a month. Not surprisingly, it did not help at all and if you read on, you’ll see why – and not just because the rest of my food intake was a bunch of poor choices.

So, what exactly is IBS? It stands for “Irritable Bowel Syndrome” and in the medical world basically means, “We can’t find anything seriously wrong with you, but your intestines are irritated for some reason – possibly stress and anxiety and too much spicy food – and we have no way to fix it other than to offer meds that may or may not help, but will probably make your symptoms worse in the long run.” OK, fine maybe that’s not exactly what it means, but you get the point.

All joking aside, an [IBS diagnosis](#) is given when other serious gastrointestinal diseases such as celiac disease, bowel cancer, Chron’s disease and also some gynecological conditions are ruled out. The most common symptoms of IBS are lower abdominal discomfort, bloating, excessive gas and also alternating diarrhea and constipation.

Well, as it turns out, some folks at [Monash University have been researching IBS](#) and these types of symptoms for a long time and have a diet program that really helps. Even if you haven’t officially been diagnosed with IBS, if you have the symptoms mentioned above and have ruled out other more serious issues, this program is definitely worth a try. It helped me tremendously and I follow it for several weeks when I have a flare up. At other times I follow a wholesome, nutrient-dense, fiber-rich, gluten-free eating plan with foods made mostly from scratch. By the way, this includes dark chocolate, some awesome spices and even organic popcorn! My old Doctor would have been so disappointed...

WELCOME LOW-FODMAPS

The program I am referring to is the [Low-FODMAP diet](#). FODMAP stands for Fermentable Olig-saccharides, Di-saccharides, Mono-saccharides and Polyols. These sugars can be poorly absorbed in the small intestine and fermented by bacteria to produce gas. Current research strongly suggests that this group of sugars contributes to IBS symptoms.

Even though some FODMAPs are poorly absorbed in ALL people – think of what happens when you eat beans, for example – the reason such strong symptoms only occur in those with IBS can be due to a hypersensitivity in the gut and/or Small Intestine Bacterial Overgrowth (otherwise known as [SIBO](#)) What this means is that in some individuals, the bacteria that are normally

located in the large intestine, move up into the small intestine which creates the symptoms of IBS.

Now, not all individuals diagnosed with IBS react to ALL of the different types of FODMAPs. Some of the FODMAPs can be tested using a special [breath test](#) that can determine malabsorption, but others cannot be tested and should simply be avoided to help relieve symptoms. The [test itself is controversial](#) and can have false results but is helpful under the right circumstances.

SOME HIGH-FODMAP FOODS TO AVOID WITH IBS:

- Fruits such as Apples, Pears, Plums and Watermelon
- Garlic (garlic infused oil can be used instead: simply cut up 1 whole bulb – not clove – of fresh garlic, add to 1 cup organic cold-pressed olive oil and gently heat on the lowest setting until fragrant; remove from heat, let cool and strain the oil into a glass bottle)
- Onions (the green part of the spring onion and chives may be used instead, as well an Indian spice called [Asafetida powder](#) that has a strong onion/garlic flavor, but I have not personally tried it)
- Beans
- FOS: Fructo-oligo-sacharides, often found in Probiotic supplements
- Nuts such as cashews and pistachios

There are a number of foods to be avoided and others that can be consumed in small quantities at a time such as asparagus, butternut squash, almonds and some dairy products as well as gluten containing grains like wheat and rye. That being said, in my experience it's best to avoid ALL gluten containing grains and dairy with IBS. For details on the exact types and quantities of the foods to be limited or avoided, you can [download the official Monash University Low Fodmap app](#) or where you can search individual foods or [purchase this book](#). For breath testing, and/or to discuss your particular health challenges and food sensitive that may also play a role in IBS, [contact me](#) for a personalized wellness plan.

