



## IBS-Free At Last!

A Useful Book about How to Avoid Irritable Bowel Syndrome

By Patsy Catsos

### Reviewed by Rosalind Michahelles

**IBS – Irritable Bowel Syndrome – torments many people. Some have figured out that certain kinds of food produce distress in the form of bloating, gas, diarrhea, or constipation.** Trial and error is probably the best way to learn these lessons; however, I found it very interesting that researchers in Australia have grouped the different fermentable sugars, which they consider the probably culprits, and have dubbed them FODMAPS for **“fermentable oligo, di- and mono-saccharides and polyols.”**

The FODMAPS are all fermentable carbohydrates: sugars, starches, and fibers.

When failing to be absorbed in the small intestines, they become food for bacteria in the colon. This often involves drawing water into the large intestine through osmosis, leading to diarrhea. Alternatively, constipation or flatulence can be problems.

Why might the carbohydrates not be absorbed in the small intestine? Possibilities are:

- missing enzymes, either from the pancreas or saliva or from the food itself;
- an overload of sugar overwhelming the process;
- a damaged intestinal lining (virus, allergy, or chronic ailment, like Crohn’s);
- a shorter bowel (blood type O or surgical shortening);
- or fructose unaccompanied by glucose. (N.b., Sometimes salt or protein help with fructose digestion.)

FODMAPS come in five “flavors:” lactose, fructose, fructans, polyols, and galactans. **Lactose** means milk, yogurt, or cheese could be problems. **Fructose** does not condemn all fruits because many, like very ripe bananas, predominate in glucose, rather than fructose, and thus may pass easily. However, coconut milk, most dried fruit, and honey fall into this category. **Fructans**, which are fructose chains (some of which are called FOS for fructo-oligosaccharides) include the allium family – garlic, onions, leeks – and also wheat. This makes me wonder if some of the people who take advantage of gluten-free bread are “fructan sensitive” rather than celiac/gluten allergic. **Polyols** include apples, apricots, peaches, and plums because sorbitol, which is often used as an added sweetener, is a major polyol. And, finally, there are the **galactans**, which include legumes and brassicas. No one will be surprised to find beans and cabbage in the list of possible offenders!

Ms. Catsos, a dietician, offers practical advice about elimination diets and adding food back in to test its effects. She has quite long lists of what falls into which category and the careful reader will find all sorts of food that **isn’t** suspect: tea, coffee, meat, fish, eggs, various fats and oils, berries and citrus in moderation, corn, buckwheat, oats, rye – and a very long list of vegetables. Peppers, beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, mushrooms, and tomatoes are among the perennially popular and which are **not** FODMAPS.

This is a useful book for anyone with intestinal difficulties. However, I can’t help wishing the original researchers had come up with a more euphonious and memorable label than FODMAPS!

## Websites with information about FODMAPS:

1. The author's website on this subject: [http://www.ibsfree.net/ibsfree\\_at\\_last/FODMAPS/](http://www.ibsfree.net/ibsfree_at_last/FODMAPS/)
2. Dietician K. Scarlata summarizes FODMAPS and provides some helpful checklists: <http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/072710p30.shtml>
3. Two of the researchers in Australia, J.S. Barrett and P.R. Gibson, write about the clinical ramifications of FODMAPS: <http://www.mecfs-vic.org.au/sites/www.mecfs-vic.org.au/files/Article-BarrettPractGastro.pdf>

### FODMAPS: Fermentable Oligo, Di- and Mono-Saccharides and Polyols

Irritable bowel syndrome: what to eat, what to avoid

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#### Possible Culprits:

LACTOSE	FRUCTOSE	FRUCTANS	POLYOLS	GALACTANS
Milk	coconut milk	artichokes	apples	beans, legumes
Yogurt	dried fruit	asparagus	plums	cabbage
Cheese	honey	garlic	peaches	Brussels sprouts
		onions, leeks	molasses	summer squash, zucchini
		Wheat		soy
				string beans

#### Non-FODMAPS

DRINKS	PROTEIN	FATS/OILS	FRUIT (small portions)	VEGETABLES	GRAINS
coffee	meat	olives	banana (ripe)	bell pepper, broccoli	corn
tea	fish	butter	berries	cauliflower, peas	buckwheat
	eggs	peanut butter	citrus	beets, fresh corn	oats
	mayo		rhubarb	carrots, winter squash	rye
				kale, mushrooms	
				lettuce, turnip,	
				potato, sweet potato	
				spinach, tomato	

From *IBS-Free At Last*, Patsy Catsos, Pond Cove Press, 2008

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