



Western Sydney Nutrition & Dietetics Newsletter

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and the benefits to a low FODMAP diet

IBS accounts for 5% of visits to GP's, and between 15-20% of referrals to gastroenterologists¹. It has been estimated that approximately 30% of individuals who suffer from IBS take sick-leave, with half of them taking more than 2 weeks from work to deal with their condition¹.

There are many mechanisms that are responsible for the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome; these are numerous and vary from person to person. This highlights the need for an individual approach to the management of IBS. Currently, the only dietary management protocol identified in the Therapeutic Guidelines for the management of IBS is a Low FODMAP diet¹.

Low FODMAP diet is a dietary approach recently developed by Dr Sue Shepherd focusing on the fermentable carbohydrates in the diet that are noted to induce symptoms of IBS, a Low FODMAP diet has been shown to reduce the symptoms of IBS in 3 out

of 4 individuals with clinically diagnosed irritable bowel syndrome^{1,2}.

FODMAP is an acronym for;

- F Fermentable (fermented by bacteria in the colon)
- O Oligosaccharides (e.g. fructans and GOS)
- D Disaccharides (e.g. lactose)
- M Monosaccharides (e.g. fructose when in excess of glucose)
- A And
- P Polyols (e.g. sorbitol and mannitol)

The diet involves a thorough process outlining the role of these compounds in the diet, the foods that need to be avoided, and how to maintain a nutritionally balanced diet whilst maintaining a Low FODMAP intake. The dietary investigation and management services offered at Western Sydney Nutrition and Dietetics involves the above mentioned points as well as follow-up consultations where each of the FODMAP compounds are challenged one at a time in order to liberalise the diet, to increase

nutritional adequacy through increased food variety.

The Low FODMAP diet is not designed to be implemented indefinitely. This approach to the management of IBS symptoms can help increase the quality of life for patients who's irritable bowel symptoms impede their ability to conduct normal activities of daily living.

References;

- 1 Shepherd S; 2012, IBS Dietary Management options, The Low FODMAP Diet, Lecture notes distributed in DAA Irritable Bowel Syndrome; Dietary Management Options conference at The Canberra Hospital, Canberra on June 8th 2012
- 2 Ong, D, Mitchell, S et al; 2010; Manipulation of short chain carbohydrates alters the pattern of gas production and genesis of symptoms on irritable bowel syndrome, Journal Of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, 25;2010;1366-1373

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries or if we can assist you in any way.

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