

# The Low Fermentable Carbohydrate Diet Challenge Phase: Adding Foods Back

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If your symptoms improve after following a Low Fermentable Carbohydrate Diet\*, you can now begin to add foods back that you have been avoiding.

It is possible that you may be avoiding some foods that you do not need to. The Challenge Phase will help you identify which foods you can and cannot tolerate.

If your symptoms have not improved, talk with your doctor about your next steps.

Other factors that may cause symptoms include:

- fatty foods
- caffeine (coffee, tea and energy drinks)
- alcohol
- spicy foods
- carbonated beverages
- large meals
- medications
- your mood, stress and anxiety

\* The Low Fermentable Carbohydrate Diet is not meant to be followed long-term.

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## The Challenge Phase

Trying food from each of the food groups will help you:

- Find out which foods with highly fermentable carbohydrates (HFC) you can eat without getting symptoms.
- Find out how much of the food you can eat at one time without getting symptoms.

Refer to your “Low Fermentable Carbohydrate Diet” handout and see the “Foods to Avoid” list for the food groups used in the challenge diets. The foods listed under “to avoid” have large amounts of HFC. Your symptoms to the challenge foods will be a good marker of how your symptoms will react to other foods within the same food group.

Everyone is different. The symptoms you have when eating foods with HFC and your ability to cope with those symptoms may be different from another person.

## Did you have a breath test?

Yes. If you had breath test and tested positive for lactose or fructose, then you need to avoid these foods. Currently, breath tests cannot be done to determine tolerance for other HFC.

No. If you did not have a breath test(s), then doing the challenge diets is the best way to find out your tolerance to HFC.

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## Steps to follow for the Challenge Phase

- Continue to eat all the foods allowed on the low fermentable carbohydrate diet while on the challenge phase.
- Add back one challenge food at a time. Introducing two foods with HFC can make it more difficult to identify the problem HFC. For example, if you are doing a dairy challenge, choose plain yogurt as it does not contain honey or fruit that has HFC.
- Write down what you eat and drink throughout the day in the food record provided in this handout. Include how much of the challenge food you had and if you developed any symptoms. Include the type of symptom and how severe it was.

## Food Record - example

| Day/time       | Food or drink  | HFC              | Symptoms              | Mood      | Location |
|----------------|--|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| Monday<br>7 am | 1 slice whole<br>wheat bread<br>1 egg<br>2 tsp margarine | Wheat<br>Fructan | No gas or<br>bloating | Felt good | Home     |

### Day 1:

- Have only a small portion of the challenge food – see chart on pages 6 and 7.

### Day 2:

- Increase the size of the portion as you are trying to bring on symptoms – see chart on pages 6 and 7.

**Day 3:**

- You will be eating the largest portion. Try to eat the amount that you would typically eat in one sitting – see chart on pages 6 and 7.

**Days 4 to 6:**

- Before you try another challenge food, follow the Low Fermentable Carbohydrate Diet for at least 3 days or until your symptoms improve. You may need longer if you suffer from constipation or if the challenge food caused severe symptoms.
- Continue to record your food intake during day 4 to 6.

**What do I do if I have symptoms?**

If you have symptoms that you cannot tolerate at any time, stop eating the challenge food for 3 to 4 days or until your symptoms improve. You can always retry the challenge food later, starting with smaller amounts.

Try to be consistent and eat the same amount of fatty and spicy foods during the challenge phase.

Continue to restrict your caffeine and alcohol intake.

Remember these foods can also affect your symptoms.

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## **Does it matter which order I add the challenge foods?**

No. It does not matter which order you add the challenge foods back. Try the one that is most important to you first.

## **Can I eat out during the challenge phase?**

Yes. You can eat out during the challenge phase. However, it may be more difficult to follow a low fermentable carbohydrate diet. Keep track of what you eat when you eat out in your food record.

## **What do I do after I have completed all of the challenge foods?**

Once you have learned which challenge foods you can and cannot tolerate, then you can start to add back other foods with HFC or combination foods such as chili and a caesar salad made with fresh garlic.

When adding foods back into your diet, remember it is the **total amount of HFC eaten at one time** that can trigger your symptoms.

It will still be a learning process for you to determine which foods with HFC and in which amounts you can eat. This is because each food item in each food group contains different amounts of HFC. You may be able to tolerate some foods and others you may not.

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## The Challenges: Highly Fermentable Carbohydrates (HFC)

| Food Group  | Highly Fermentable Carbohydrate (HFC) | Challenge foods                   | How to include   |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dairy</b><br><br>If you are lactose intolerant, skip to next phase.              | lactose                               | Milk, plain yogurt or ice cream   | Day 1: ½ cup<br>Day 2: 1 cup<br>Day 3: up to 2 cups  |
| <b>Fruit</b><br><br>If you had a negative fructose breath test, skip to next phase. | fructose                              | Mango/mango juice or honey        | Day 1: 1 tbsp honey or ½ cup mango/juice<br><br>Day 2: 1 tbsp honey or ½ cup mango/juice morning and supper<br><br>Day 3: 2 tbsp honey or 1 cup mango/juice morning and supper |
| <b>Wheat</b>  | fructans                              | Bread, pasta or high fibre cereal | Day 1: 1 slice bread or ½ cup pasta or cereal<br><br>Day 2: 2 slices bread or 1 cup pasta/cereal<br><br>Day 3: 3 slices bread or 1 ½ cup pasta/cereal                          |
| <b>Vegetable</b>  | fructans                              | Asparagus or broccoli             | Day 1: ½ cup<br><br>Day 2: 1 cup<br><br>Day 3: up to 1½ cups   |

| Food Group     | Highly Fermentable Carbohydrate (HFC) | Challenge foods                     | How to include   |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Legumes</b> | galactans                             | Kidney beans, chick peas or lentils | Day 1: ½ cup<br>Day 2: 1 cup<br>Day 3: up to 1 ½ cups  |
| <b>Other</b>   | polyols                               | Prunes/dried apricots or apple/pear | Day 1: 2 prunes/apricots or ½ apple/pear per day<br>Day 2: 2 prunes/apricots morning and supper or 1 apple/pear per day<br>Day 3: 3 prunes/apricots or 1 apple/pear morning and supper |

## Supplements to help with gas and bloating

### Lactose

If you are lactose intolerant you can take a lactase enzyme (Lacteeze Ultra, Lactaid) which will help you digest foods containing the milk sugar lactose.

### Legumes

If you have difficulty tolerating legumes such as chickpeas, kidney beans and lentils, then you can use a product which contains the enzyme alpha-galactosidase such as “Beano” to help you digest the galactans in these foods.

These products can be found over-the-counter in the pharmacy department at your drug or grocery store. Follow the directions on the package on how to take them.

**Notes**

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# Food Record

Challenge Day Number: \_\_\_\_\_



| Day/time | Food or drink | HFC | Symptoms | Mood | Location |
|----------|---------------|-----|----------|------|----------|
|          |               |     |          |      |          |

please turn over →

# Food Record

Challenge Day Number: \_\_\_\_\_



| Day/time | Food or drink | HFC | Symptoms | Mood | Location |
|----------|---------------|-----|----------|------|----------|
|          |               |     |          |      |          |