



# Nutritional Strategies for Managing Digestive Disorders: From Irritable Bowel Syndrome to Crohn's Disease

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## DESCRIPTION

Digestive disorders, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Crohn's Disease, can significantly impact a person's quality of life. Proper dietary management plays a key role in alleviating symptoms and promoting overall gut health. Patients often associate their symptoms (abdominal pain, changes in bowel movements) with specific foods. The most incriminated foods in IBS are FODMAPs (Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides, and Polyols). These poorly absorbed carbohydrates are found in various foods, including garlic, onions, beans, and certain fruits. Identifying specific foods allows patients to make informed dietary choices. While these foods can vary among individuals, common culprits include nuts, seeds, beans, and fresh fruits and vegetables. A low residue diet (limiting high-fiber foods) may help relieve abdominal pain and diarrhea, especially in patients with strictures. The low FODMAP diet restricts foods high in fermentable sugars and alcohols. Recommended foods include broccoli, carrots, cucumber, lettuce, potatoes, and green bananas. Avoid garlic, onions, artichokes, and other high-FODMAP vegetables and fruits. Wheat and certain spices should also be limited. Prioritize a well-balanced diet rich in nutrients. Include lean proteins (chicken, fish, tofu), whole grains (rice, quinoa), and healthy fats (avocado, olive oil). Adequate protein intake supports tissue repair, while healthy fats provide essential fatty acids. Cold foods may help reduce diarrhea. Staying hydrated is essential for both IBS and Crohn's patients. Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption. Both can irritate the gastrointestinal tract and worsen symptoms. Individual responses to foods vary. Some patients tolerate certain foods better than others.

- Briefly blanching vegetables reduces their fibre content.
- Removing peels and seeds from fruits and vegetables lowers insoluble fibre.
- Blending foods into smooth purees or soups makes them easier to digest.

Fibre intake is a potential consideration for Crohn's Disease patients and fibre is generally beneficial for digestive health. Found in foods like oats, beans, and fruits, soluble fibre forms a gel-like substance in the gut. It can help regulate bowel movements and may be better tolerated by Crohn's patients. Commonly found in whole grains, nuts, and vegetables, insoluble fiber adds bulk to stool. During flare-ups, the consumption of certain foods may intensify symptoms such as abdominal pain and diarrhea. Maintaining a food diary can be beneficial for tracking symptoms and identifying patterns that may help manage one's condition effectively. Consult a registered dietitian to create a personalized nutrition plan. Remember, gradual adjustments and personalized guidance are essential. Always collaborate with the healthcare team to create a fibre strategy that supports one's gut health with minimizing symptoms. Crohn's disease is highly individual. Keep a food diary to track how different fiber-rich foods affect individuals. If experience discomfort, consider adjusting portion sizes or cooking methods. Consume fibre earlier in the day when the gut is less sensitive. This allows for better adaptation and minimizes symptoms during the day. This soluble fiber supplement can help regulate bowel movements. Start with small doses and gradually increase to avoid discomfort. Another gentle soluble fiber supplement that may benefit some Crohn's patients. While some Crohn's patients may tolerate prebiotics well, others may experience gas and bloating. Sources include garlic, onions, leeks, and asparagus. Experiment cautiously to find what works best for the individual.

## CONCLUSION

Hydration plays a key role in digestive health by aiding in food breakdown, nutrient absorption, and preventing constipation. Incorporating stress management techniques such as exercise, meditation, and adequate sleep further supports gut function and reduces symptom severity. Navigating digestive disorders involves a multifaceted approach that combines dietary adjustments, hydration, probiotics, and stress management. By

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understanding individual sensitivities and nutritional needs, individuals can significantly improve their quality of life and manage symptoms effectively. Consulting with healthcare professionals ensures personalized guidance and support

throughout the journey to digestive health. This holistic approach empowers individuals to make informed choices about their diet and lifestyle, fostering long-term well-being and digestive comfort.