

What is Fructose Malabsorption?

by Julie O'Connell Seamer



The foods we eat are made up of many components, including sugars. Fructose is a sugar found in many foods, including honey, wheat, fruit and vegetable. Fructose is present in a single sugar form and also as a chain of fructose sugar units (fructans).

Fructose mal-absorption is a disability of the small intestine to absorb fructose properly. Typical symptoms include:

- * bloating
- * diarrhoea and/or constipation
- * flatulence
- * stomach pain (varying from mild and chronic to acute but erratic)
- * aching eyes
- * fuzzy head
- * fatigue
- * depression

To complicate matters, not every food that contains fructose is a problem for people with fructose mal-absorption. Strategies to minimise symptoms include:

avoiding food with high fructose content

apples, coconut milk, dried figs, fruit juice, guavas, corn syrup, sucrose, honey, lychee, mangos, melons, pawpaw, pears, persimmons, prunes, quince, raisins

avoiding foods with high fructan content

artichoke, asparagus, green beans, leeks, onions, wheat

reduce the fructose load by avoiding

sodas and other beverages, dried fruit, tinned fruit in natural juice, sorbitol, sweet wines, too much fruit of any kind in a short time-frame.

Fructose malabsorption can be diagnosed using a hydrogen breath test, which recognises unabsorbed fructose (that creates rapid bacterial fermentation, changing gastrointestinal motility and produces gases such as hydrogen, methane and carbon dioxide detected with the test).

While it is advisable to speak with a Practitioner who has experience in fructose malabsorption, this "condition" is mostly NOT regarded not as an abnormality but a physiological process offering an opportunity to improve functional gastrointestinal symptoms by dietary change.

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A useful resource is the Fructose Malabsorption Product Guide, written by Dietitian Sue Shepherd. Also see FODMAPS websites and resources:

<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/cecs/gastro/fodmap/about.html>

<https://fedup.com.au/factsheets/additive-and-natural-chemical-factsheets/fructose-malabsorption>