A Gut Friendly Diet Approach -
From Veggies to FODMAP to GAPS

Paleo Diet

The first thing I do with all of my patients is start them on a customized Paleo diet. I individualize a patient's diet with a three-step program.

Step 1: 30 Days Reset
It begins with a 30-day Reset Diet that allows high-quality, natural animal meats, bone broths, eggs, starchy and non-starchy vegetables, fermented vegetables, traditional fats, sea salt, and spices. During this reset period, the following foods are completely off-limits: dairy, grains, sweeteners, sodas, legumes, processed foods, alcohol, and industrial seed and vegetable oils. See the "Paleo 30-Day Reset" handout* for a more detailed description of this diet.

In Step 2, Rebuild
Reintroduce foods that were eliminated in Step 1. By testing gray-area foods one by one, you can see which foods are safe to incorporate into the diet and which ones need to be removed for the foreseeable future.

Step 3 Revive
When we fine-tune your diet to figure out what is the best balance of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats for you. Do you do best with three meals a day, six meals a day, or intermittent fasting?

If you are struggling with stubborn gut symptoms after working on the diet in these ways, there may be an underlying gut infection or unchecked chronic stress.
If you have an irritated, inflamed gut, certain non-starchy vegetables may be aggravating the situation.

See Handout on 30 Day Paleo Reset Diet

Non-Starchy Vegetables

Vegetables are one of the few foods that every diet philosophy agrees are healthy. That said, vegetables (particularly non-starchy vegetables) tend to be high in insoluble fiber, which can irritate an inflamed gut. If you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or other digestive disorders, you may benefit from reducing their intake of vegetables that are **high in insoluble fiber**.
These include:

- Greens (spinach, lettuce, kale, mesclun, collards, arugula, watercress, and so on)
- Whole peas, snow peas, snap peas, pea pods
- Green beans
- Kernel corn

- Bell peppers
- Eggplant
- Celery
- Onions, shallots, leeks, scallions, garlic
- Cabbage, bok choy, Brussels sprouts
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower

Healthy Tip 1 Only a certain few people need complete avoidance of vegetables that are high in insoluble fiber

Healthy Tip 2 Using **preparation, cooking, or fermentation** can make these foods more digestible and less likely to irritate the gut.

1. Always eat insoluble-fiber foods with other foods that contain soluble fiber.
2. Never eat insoluble-fiber foods on an empty stomach.
3. Remove the stems and peels (i.e., from broccoli, cauliflower, and winter greens) from veggies (and fruits) high in insoluble fiber.
4. Dice, mash, chop, grate, or blend high-insoluble-fiber foods to make them easier to
5. break down.
6. Eat well-cooked insoluble-fiber foods: steamed thoroughly, boiled in soup, braised, etc.; avoid consuming them in stir-fries, and if you do eat them raw, prepare them as described in #3 above.
7. Eat Fermented vegetables. The fermentation process “pre-digests” the vegetables and makes them easier to absorb.

Fermented Vegetables

Fermented vegetables:

- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi
- Sauerruben
- cortido

The fermentation process “pre-digests” the vegetables and makes them easier to absorb. And they contain probiotic microorganisms that help heal the gut.

Fermenting vegetables can also make insoluble fibers and FODMAPs easier to digest
You can make fermented vegetables at home, as can your patients. Take a look at **this page** (https://paleoleap.com/fermented-food-recipes/) for a great primer. It’s really quite easy—and cheap. Fermented vegetables should say “raw” on the jar, and they should be in the refrigerated section. The sauerkraut in the condiments section has been pasteurized and won’t have the same beneficial effect.

FODMAPS

FODMAPs are carbohydrates / sugars that are found in foods.
Lactose from dairy products, fructose from certain fruits, coconut products and sweeteners, fructans from fibrous vegetables, and polyols from fruit and sugar alcohols are all rich in FODMAPs and can be difficult to digest for people with gut disorders.

FODMAP stands for:

Fermentable
Oligosaccharides
Fructans like wheat, garlic, onion, inulin and Galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS) like legumes such as beans, lentils, soybeans, etc
Disaccharides
Lactose like dairy
Monosaccharides
excess Fructose like fruits, honey, high fructose corn syrup
Polyols
Sweeteners with Sorbitol, Mannitol, Maltitol, Xylitol and Isomalt, Stone fruits such as avocado, apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, plums, etc

FODMAPs pull water into the digestive tracts, and when not be digested or absorbed well, they will increase intestinal movements or diarrhea.

These carbohydrates are not well absorbed in the body and remain in the digestive tract for longer periods, and will be fermented by bacteria in the gut when eaten too much. The symptoms of bloating, constipation, gas pain, flatulence will be exacerbated especially if you have small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO).

While a low-FODMAP diet can be somewhat restrictive, especially at first, it's rarely necessary to completely eradicate FODMAPs from the diet. Most people improve significantly simply by greatly reducing their consumption of these foods. FODMAP intolerance is not like other food sensitivities like gluten or casein intolerance. In those cases, the immune system reacts—regardless of how much of that food you eat

STEP 1: Generalized avoidance

Restrict **ALL** high FODMAPs for **4-6 weeks,** or until good symptomatic control is achieved. This is done by:

- substituting high FODMAP foods with lower options, or

- by reducing the total FODMAP load consumed at each meal or across the day.

Healthy Tip

1. Liver from pastured animals one to two times weekly will help to replenish your vitamin B12, iron, and other nutrients you may be deficient in due to dysbiosis.
2. Homemade bone broths can be very healing for the GI tract.
3. Meats are most easily digested when prepared at low cooking temperatures, using moist cooking techniques. Consider using a slow-cooker, stewing, braising or poaching for at least 30 days.
4. Vegetables should be well-cooked with any seeds removed to improve digestibility; minimize your intake of raw, fibrous fruits and vegetables
5. Be very careful when eating out, and consider calling ahead to ask about preparation methods and ingredients to find an option that works for you.

STEP 2: Reintroduction

Most patients do not have the same reaction to each class of FODMAPs listed above. Some people seem to have no trouble with lactose but do very poorly with excess fructose. Others may tolerate polyols but not fructans. After removing all FODMAPs x 4-6 weeks, reintroduce them category by category to see which ones are well tolerated. E.g. Reintroduce fruits and vegetables in the fructan category. Once the patient knows how fructans affect her, then you could recommend reintroducing the foods with excess fructose, and so forth.
Then develop an individualized plan by identifying specific FODMAP foods that cause symptoms.

Healthy Rule 1 If you are concerned about a single food, test it for yourself, Then you'll know if it is Fodmap friendly for you.

Healthy Rule 2 All carbohydrates have some FODMAP in it, so stick with a diet with moderate healthy fats and proteins, and low in carbohydrates

Healthy Rule 3 With FODMAP intolerance, it's more of a "threshold response": if a person is eating a lot of FODMAPs on a daily basis, the threshold for tolerating FODMAPs will be low. However, if the overall intake of FODMAPs is low, the patient may be able to tolerate a small amount of them without much problem. This can make things a little easier when people are eating out, traveling, or are in an environment where they don't have as much control over their food choices.

Healthy Rule 4 It is best to use the low-FODMAP diet for the short term and then gradually reintroduce some of the well-tolerated FODMAPs into the diet. At least two studies have shown that long-term FODMAP diets reduce the levels of beneficial bacteria in the colon, which is

obviously not desirable. You can read more about this topic and clinical treatments in **this article**.

FODMAP Food List

Foods	OK to EAT	May Cause symptoms	AVOID
Vegetables	Alfafa Bamboo shoots Bell peppers Bok Choy Carrot Cherry tomatoes Chives Cucumber Eggplant Ginger Green beans Kale Lettuce Olives Parsnip Pickles Seaweed, nori Spinach Spring onion (green part only) Swiss chards Squash Tomatoes Water chestnuts Zucchini	Avocado (polyol) Brussels sprouts (fructans) Celery (polyol) Fennel bulb (fructans) Green peas (fructans) Mushrooms (polyol)	Artichoke (fructose) Asparagus (fructose) Broccoli (fructans) Cabbage (fructans) Cauliflower (polyol) Garlic (fructans) Jerusalem artichoke (fructans) Leeks (fructans) Okra (fructans) Onion (fructans) Shallots (fructans) Snow peas (fructans, polyols) Sugar snap peas (fructose) Raddichio (fructans) Tomato sauces and tomato paste (fructose, fructans)
Fruits	Banana,ripe Blueberries Grapefruit Kiwi Lemon Lime Mandarin Melons (including cantaloupe and honeydew) Orange Papaya Passionfruit Pineapple Raspberries Rhubarb Strawberries	Banana, unripe Longon (polyol) Lychee (polyol) Rambutan (polyol) Grapes (fructose)	Apple (fructose and polyol) Apricot (polyol) Cherries (fructose and polyol) Mango (fructose) Nectarine (polyol) Peach (polyol) Pear (fructose and polyol) Persimmon (polyol) Plum (polyol) Watermelon (fructose and polyol)

Grains / Starch	Arrowroot Buckwheat Cornmeal Gluten free grains or Chips or cereal: - Amaranth - Corn - Oats - Potato - Quinoa - Rice / Rice Bran - Tapioca - Millet - Spelt White potatoes White Rice Plantains Turnip Rutabaga Taro / Cassava / Yuca	Sweet potato (polyol) Yam (polyol) (<½ cup)	Legumes (galactans) Wheat Rye Gluten containing products
Nuts	All nuts may be difficult to digest, and caution should be taken. Sprouted nuts or homemade sprouted nut butters may be best tolerated.	Most nuts and nut butter: (<¼ cup)	Pistachios (fructans) Almonds Hazelnuts
Dairy	Ghee	High-fat, low-lactose dairy products made from the milk of pastured cows, ideally raw; only if tolerated: - Cream Kefir (fermented 24 hours) - Yogurt (fermented 24 hours) Aged cheese	Cheese All commercial dairy products made from non-pastured, grain-fed cows: Condensed milk Fresh cheese Milk (cow, goat, sheep) Soft cheese (ricotta, cottage, mascarpone, cream) Sour cream Ice cream Yogurt
Protein	Meat Poultry Fish and Seafood Eggs		Chickpeas Lentils Dried beans (all) (all galactans)

	Bacon (no additives) Tofu		
Fats	Coconut oil Ghee, butter, cream Lard Olive oil Macadamia oil Homemade mayo Olives	Avocado (<¼ avocado)	
Treats / Sweeteners	Brown Sugar Cane sugar Rice syrup Sucrose Glucose Gelati Sorbet	Dried coconut (<¼ cup) Coconut sugar Cocoa powder Coconut milk / cream/ butter Dark Chocolate Maple syrup Molasses	Agave syrup (fructose) Artificial sweeteners (Splenda, aspartame, etc.) High-fructose corn syrup (fructose) Honey (fructose) Refined sugars
Seasonings	Salt Pepper Fresh herbs Dried herbs Ginger Garlic infused oil Spices (avoid blends with onion and garlic powder) Vinegars - Balsamic - Red Wine - Apple Cider Asafoetida powder Seaweed, nori Olive tapenade Sun-dried tomatoes		Sugar-, grain-, soy- or gluten- containing seasonings or condiments (ketchup, soy sauce, some tamari sauces, balsamic glaze, commercial mayonnaise and salad dressings) Chicory (fructans) Sugar alcohols (sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, etc.) Gums, carrageenan, soy lecithin MSG and colorings
Drinks	Water Tea Homemade bone broth	Teas with unsafe fruit Dry wines Coffee	Sweet wines Port wines Fruit Juices Sodas (fructose) Beer (most contain gluten and/or mannitol)

Reducing Starch Intake and the Gaps Diet

In general, starchy vegetables are well tolerated by those with digestive issues. However, a subset of people—especially those with heartburn, GERD, and inflammatory bowel disease—may benefit from reducing their intake of starch. This means avoiding or significantly restricting potatoes, sweet potatoes, plantains, yuca, taro, and all grains, including white rice. This isn't a permanent dietary change. Most are able to safely add starchy vegetables back into their diet once their gut health is stabilized and their initial symptoms have decreased significantly.

The GAPS (Gut and Psychology Syndrome) diet is a specific dietary approach to healing digestive and brain disorders that is similar to the Paleo diet but forbids starchy plants.
The GAPS diet is similar to the Paleo diet that but with the following distinctions:

- It forbids **all sources of starch** (e.g., sweet potatoes, potatoes, plantains, etc.).
- It emphasizes the use of **fermented foods and bone broths** to restore healthy gut microbiota and gut barrier integrity.
- It permits dairy products that contain little or no lactose, such as butter, ghee, homemade kefir and yogurt, hard cheeses, and fermented cream. Fluid milk, soft cheese, and unfermented cream are not permitted.
- The GAPS diet begins with an introductory period that allows only meat, fish, bone broth, ginger tea, and small amounts of fermented foods and progresses through several stages, concluding with the "full GAPS diet," which is much less restrictive.

The GAPS diet requires a significant investment of time and energy, but the results are often well worth the effort. Since the introduction phase is very low in fermentable fiber, it can starve the gut flora. This is helpful when you have pathogenic gut bacteria, but it also starves the beneficial gut bacteria, which is not desirable. My recommendation is to use GAPS during the initial stages of recovery and then start adding some starchy plants and other fermentable fibers back into the diet.