UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital
Digestive Health Center

Fructose Malabsorption

Fructose is a type of sugar that is normally absorbed through the small intestine wall. It is difficult for our body to absorb all fructose we eat but some people may have more problems with absorbing it then others. This is called fructose malabsorption.

When fructose is malabsorbed, it will travel through the intestine and reach the large intestine where our natural bacteria live. The intestinal bacteria will feed on the fructose and produce gas, which can make some people feel bloated. The fructose also can act like a sponge pulling water into the intestine and causing diarrhea. To lessen these effects, try eating foods with less fructose. Below are some suggestions to get started. A dietitian can provide further assistance to help limit fructose in your diet.

Remember this is an intolerance and you may not need to avoid all sources of fructose but simply decrease the amount. Every person can tolerate different amounts of fructose. The goal is to have as varied of a diet as possible while still managing digestive symptoms.

Food group	Foods to Limit/Avoid	Helpful Tips
Fruits	• Apples, pears, cherries, watermelon, mango (these fruit have more free fructose) • Dried fruit • Fruit juice	• Try ½ cup servings of other fruits not listed and spread throughout the day • Eat fruit with a meal, especially a meal that contains protein (cheese, egg, meat, or milk)
High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)	• Sweetened beverages: Soda pop, sweet tea, fruit punch, some energy drinks • Read labels of candy, cookies, snack cakes, barbeque sauce, catsup, syrup, sweet salad dressings, cold cereals, baked beans	• Read food labels • Limit foods with HFCS listed as one of the first few ingredients on the food label
Vegetables	• Asparagus, artichokes, sugar snap peas	
Sugar	• Splenda has questionable tolerance • Honey and agave syrup usually not tolerated	• May be able to tolerate small amounts of table sugar, brown sugar • Sugar substitutes that do not contain fructose (aspartame, saccharin, stevia)

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