

BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING THE LOW FERMENTABLE OLIGOSACCHARIDE, DISACCHARIDE, MONOSACCHARIDE AND POLYOL DIET IN ADULTS WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

Jane Wilcox

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A qualitative interview study of 17 adults with IBS who undertook a dietitian-led three-phase low FODMAP diet identified four themes related to expectations, experiences, barriers, and enablers across restriction, reintroduction, and personalisation phases.

KEY POINTS

- Seventeen adults with IBS (mean age 37.5 years, 88% female, 76% with diarrhoea-predominant symptoms) completed semi-structured interviews after participating in a dietitian-led low FODMAP diet study between October 2020 and April 2022, with 76% completing all three phases.
- Participants expected complete symptom resolution during the restriction phase and were disappointed when symptoms were not entirely alleviated; residual frustration persisted even after personalisation despite overall symptom reductions.
- The three-phase process required significant planning, effort and self-efficacy, with environmental barriers including eating out and multi-person households, and personal barriers including apprehension to try long-avoided foods and symptoms during reintroduction.
- Ability to adhere to personal tolerance levels of fermentable carbohydrates enabled successful completion of reintroduction and personalisation, and most participants incorporated learning from the diet into daily life after completion.

- The authors conclude that personal beliefs, experiences and expectations impact adherence and completion, and that further personalisation to individual circumstances is needed to improve outcomes.

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