



Live your Inspired Life

Low FODMAP Diet Coaching

Coping with Stress

Why do my symptoms sometimes return even though I am being strict with the diet?

Stress and other psychological states of mind can cause your symptoms to reappear. This is true even in people without IBS. If they are facing a difficult exam or a visit to the dentist, they will complain of upset stomachs or butterflies in the tummy.

What does stress do to my gut?

Stress interferes with the brain to gut signals and can cause various issues with the digestive system. Those with IBS have an oversensitive gut and perceive pain more acutely already so add stress to the mix which affects everyone and then you have trouble. Stress decreases the flow of oxygen and blood to your gut, decreases the absorption of nutrients and the enzymatic output in your gut.

Do the circumstances of my meals affect my FBS?

Mealtimes should be calm and stress-free while your digestive system is working hard or you could be creating some of those messed up messages to come into play. Always take your time when you eat and don't have a fast meal while driving or at your desk while you continue working. That is asking for trouble. Don't have family discussions of a heavy nature at the table. Set up a family meeting at a later time if issues do arise for discussion.

What other effects can stress have on my health?

Short term stress can be helpful because the stress hormones that are released make you flee from danger or stand your ground and fight. Your heartbeat increases, your breathing gets faster, your muscles tense, and you start to sweat. But if this lasts for a prolonged period of time, that constant flow of hormones will wear down your body and you become more susceptible to illness. It will start with headaches, tiredness, difficulty sleeping and concentrating, mood swings and a disturbed digestive system. If it becomes long term, your health will deteriorate badly. Depression, high blood pressure, heart disease, heartburn, ulcers, various other gut disorders, skin flare ups and the list goes on.



How can I reduce the stress in my work life?

If your job is stressful to the level that it is causing symptoms even though you are following the diet, then it is time to re-assess your work life and to look at alternatives that could be less stressful. No amount of money is worth having a lowered quality of life because of health problems. Stress at work can come from various different areas. You could simply be unhappy in general and then it is time to actively look for a new job. Perhaps you enjoy your job but your workload is too heavy. Don't let that situation continue for so long it starts to affect your health. Document exactly what you are expected to achieve in the 8 hours you are at work and then sit down with your boss and explain that you need assistance to get the work done to the standard that is required. At the very least, you have been heard and the conversation will be on record if things get worse in the future. Don't be a martyr or stoical about it because then no one knows. Keep your boss informed so they have a chance to make a change. If you are afraid that you could be fired or let go, then have that conversation with your boss and express your concerns and explain what that would do to you and your family. Meanwhile start looking for other work which is not so tenuous. If your stress is coming from discrimination or harassment, then take the appropriate steps to lay a complaint. Again, don't be a martyr or your health will suffer. Nothing is worth a relapse now you are doing so well.



How can I reduce the stress in my family life?

If the stress is right there in your family, you might have to make some hard choices. You are no use to them when you are ill. It could be about creating some boundaries for your children and sometimes for adults as well. Those boundaries won't be there until you are clear on them and are committed to putting them in place. You won't see a change in anyone else until you change yourself. If you react to the same old problems in your family in the same old way, then nothing will change. Try to step back away from the situation for a while and see if there is a different way to approach the issue. Get some help from family counsellors if necessary. There is no shame in admitting you aren't coping. It would be better if more families got help before violence became a part of the mix.

How can I reduce the stress my poor health is causing me?

Health issues are very stressful because without our health, everything is coloured grey. The only answer is to improve that health and then the stress will



fall away. As you start to see small improvements as you progress with the diet, you will be more inspired and less stressed because you now have hope that your health can improve. Starting the diet is the one way you can reduce that form of stress.

I am a stressed out personality type. How do I cope with that?

Stress can come from inside rather than from external factors. If you are a fearful, anxious individual who always thinks the worst is going to happen, then it is time to learn some relaxation techniques, like meditation, deep breathing and gradual muscle relaxation. Stress can't be avoided in life but how we deal with it can be modified. One of the best ways to create a calm moment in your busy day is to meditate in the morning before you do anything else. This will set you up well for the rest of the day. Try avoiding the news so you don't get filled with fearsome images and thoughts of suffering and impending doom. Learn self-hypnosis techniques to control your wandering negative thoughts.

Are there any specific therapies that can help IBS and stress?



Hypnotherapy has been shown to improve IBS symptoms by the use of visual suggestions to imagine the pain disappearing, and can be a good way to work on any stress triggers that can be worsening your symptoms. But be sure to find one who works specifically in this area of the gut-brain relationship.

Also, cognitive behavior therapy, which works on negative, distorted thoughts and teaches you to replace them with positive, realistic thoughts, has shown some good results for IBS because of the reduced stress from the therapy.