

A FLATLINE FIELD GUIDE · FREE

5 hidden FODMAPs in "healthy" foods.

Why your "clean" diet might be the reason you're still bloated. The triggers most online FODMAP guides quietly skip — and the swaps that actually fix them.

You're eating clean. Why are you still bloated?

If you've cut gluten, dropped dairy, taken probiotics, switched to "wholesome" snacks, and you're still bloated by 3pm — there's a reason most generic gut health advice didn't fix you. Most "clean eating" guides operate at the wrong level of detail.

The actual mechanism of adult bloating, in roughly two-thirds of cases, is FODMAP malabsorption — six specific sugar groups that some guts can't process well. The trick is that these sugars are hiding in foods that look healthy, and they're often **more concentrated** in the "healthy" version than the conventional one.

Below are five of the most common hidden FODMAP sources we see in our reader case studies. None of them are obvious. All of them are foods that wellness influencers actively tell you to eat more of.

This isn't an anti-health-food rant. The point is to give you the visibility most generic guides skip, so you can isolate which one is actually driving your symptoms. Read it once. Try a swap for two weeks. See what changes.

*This guide is a brief excerpt-style companion to **FLATLINE Vol. 01 — The 30-Day Bloat Reset**. The full protocol covers all six FODMAP groups, a structured 14-day elimination + 14-day reintroduction schedule, motility work, and a daily tracker. If this guide is useful, the full reset goes much deeper.*

01

Garlic and onion (the ones in literally everything).

WHERE THEY HIDE

Restaurant sauces · "natural" stocks · pre-made hummus · most salad dressings · seasoning blends · soup bases · marinated meats

Garlic and onion are among the most concentrated sources of fructans (a type of FODMAP) in the human food supply. Even small amounts trigger symptoms in people sensitive to fructans — and the dose-response is steep.

Two things make this the #1 hidden trigger:

One: Garlic and onion are in nearly every prepared food. "Natural flavors," "spice," and "seasoning" on labels almost always include them. You're getting daily exposure even when you think you've eliminated them.

Two: They're considered "healthy" in mainstream nutrition messaging, so you're often eating MORE of them when you "eat clean" — fresh garlic in your home cooking, raw onion on salads, garlic-roasted vegetables.

The result: people doing FODMAP eliminations who fail to fully remove garlic and onion often report "the diet didn't work for me." It worked. They didn't actually do it.

SWAP TO TEST

Use the green tops of scallions only (the white parts contain fructans, the green parts don't). Use garlic-infused oil instead of fresh garlic — fructans aren't fat-soluble, so the flavor transfers but the FODMAP doesn't. Asafoetida (hing) is a traditional Indian spice that mimics the savory depth of onion and is FODMAP-free.

02

Apples, pears, and "healthy" smoothie staples.

WHERE THEY HIDE

Daily fruit habits · green smoothies · "clean" snack bars · dried fruit mixes · juice cleanses · most fruit-flavored kombuchas

Apples and pears are both high in excess fructose, a FODMAP that the small intestine struggles to absorb when it's present in greater amounts than glucose. About one-third of adults have some degree of fructose malabsorption, and most don't know it.

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is fine if you're not part of that one-third. If you are, that daily apple is the reason you're bloated by mid-afternoon every day.

The smoothie problem. A typical "healthy" smoothie stacks 2-3 high-FODMAP fruits at once: apple, pear, mango, blackberry. Combined dose is often 3-4x the threshold that triggers symptoms. The "I'm being healthy" narrative makes people miss that they're getting a maximum-strength FODMAP load before lunch.

The dried fruit trap. Drying concentrates fructose. A dried apricot delivers 5-10x the FODMAP load of the fresh fruit. Trail mixes, "clean" energy bars, and granolas often contain dried apple, dried pear, dried mango — all high-FODMAP.

SWAP TO TEST

Bananas (slightly underripe), strawberries, blueberries, oranges, kiwi, and grapes are FODMAP-friendly fruits in normal portions. Watch the dose — even safe fruits trigger symptoms in large quantities. One serving at a time, not a smoothie of five.

03

Cauliflower, mushrooms, and the "low-carb veggie" stack.

WHERE THEY HIDE

Cauliflower rice · cauliflower pizza crust · "veggie" pasta · stir-fry mixes · keto bowls · fancy mushroom blends

Cauliflower contains mannitol — a polyol FODMAP that causes some of the most dramatic bloat reactions in sensitive people. Mushrooms contain mannitol too, plus other polyols.

Both have been heavily promoted as "healthy swaps" for higher-carb foods over the last decade. Cauliflower rice, cauliflower pizza crust, mushroom-based meat substitutes — they look like a clean choice, but for the FODMAP-sensitive subset, they're actively triggering.

The signature symptom: you eat what you think is a healthy meal (a "veggie bowl" or cauliflower rice stir-fry) and you're more bloated than after a slice of pizza. That's not a calorie thing. That's a FODMAP thing.

The keto-veggie problem. Many keto/low-carb meal patterns rely heavily on cauliflower and mushrooms because they're low-carb. Someone eating "clean keto" can be getting a max-dose mannitol load every day without knowing it.

SWAP TO TEST

For cauliflower rice, try regular white rice (lower FODMAP per gram than brown). For cauliflower crust, traditional thin crust in moderation. Oyster mushrooms are lower-FODMAP than button or cremini. Bell peppers, zucchini, carrots, and spinach are well-tolerated alternatives in stir-fries and bowls.

04

Lentils, chickpeas, and "plant-based protein" everything.

WHERE THEY HIDE

Lentil pasta · chickpea pasta · hummus · plant-based meat substitutes · "high-protein" snacks · most vegetarian bowls

Legumes contain galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS), one of the six FODMAP groups. They're notoriously difficult for some people to digest — the "musical fruit" reputation isn't a joke, it's mechanism.

Two trends have made this trigger more common in recent years:

Plant-based pasta. Lentil pasta, chickpea pasta, and bean-based "protein-rich" pasta have become mainstream. People switching from semolina pasta to lentil pasta thinking it's healthier are often dramatically increasing their FODMAP intake. A typical serving of lentil pasta delivers 3-4x the GOS load that triggers symptoms.

Hummus as a "healthy snack." Hummus is mostly chickpeas (high GOS) plus garlic (high fructans — see #1). It's a maximum-strength bloat bomb dressed up as health food. People eating hummus daily as a "clean snack" are often the ones most confused why their bloat won't quit.

SWAP TO TEST

Canned chickpeas, rinsed thoroughly (rinsing reduces GOS by ~40%), tolerable in small portions (about 1/4 cup) for many people. For pasta, traditional wheat pasta in normal servings is often lower-FODMAP than lentil pasta. For protein, eggs, fish, chicken, hard cheeses, and tofu (firm, not silken) are all FODMAP-friendly.

05

Sugar-free everything (especially gum, mints, and "low-sugar" treats).

WHERE THEY HIDE

Sugar-free gum · sugar-free mints · "keto" candy · diet protein bars · sugar-free chocolate · "no sugar added" ice cream

The polyol FODMAPs (sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, erythritol) are the sweeteners used in nearly every "sugar-free" product. They're FODMAPs by definition — most of them are deliberately chosen because they pass through the small intestine without being absorbed.

The bloat mechanism is direct: unabsorbed polyols draw water into the gut and ferment in the colon, causing rapid gas and distension. This is dose-dependent and often dramatic.

The chewing gum problem. Most sugar-free gum contains sorbitol or xylitol. Two pieces of gum a day can be enough to maintain chronic low-grade bloat in sensitive people. People often don't even count gum as "food" mentally, so the connection never clicks.

The keto/protein bar problem. "Low-net-carb" protein bars typically use maltitol or erythritol to hit the macros. A daily protein bar can be a major bloat driver that the person attributes to their "healthy" choices.

The "stomach upset" warning is real. Sugar-free gum packages often have a small warning: "excess consumption may have a laxative effect." That warning is acknowledging the polyol mechanism. It's the same mechanism causing your bloat.

SWAP TO TEST

Drop sugar-free gum entirely for two weeks. Check if your baseline bloat improves. For sweeteners in cooking, stevia and monk fruit are non-FODMAP. Real sugar in moderation is FODMAP-free (sucrose is glucose + fructose in equal parts, which is well-absorbed).

Pick one. Drop it for two weeks. See what changes.

The mistake most people make with information like this is trying to eliminate all five at once. Don't. You'll lose the signal. If you remove ten foods and feel better, you don't know which one was actually causing the symptom.

The right approach: pick the trigger you suspect most based on your daily diet. Drop it cleanly for 14 days. Track your bloat on a 1–10 scale daily. If symptoms drop meaningfully, you've found a trigger. If not, that wasn't it — try the next one.

Be careful with: sneaky reintroduction (a "small amount of garlic in dinner won't matter" — yes it will, fructans are dose-cumulative), partial elimination (cutting fresh garlic but eating hummus that contains it), and short trials (less than 7 days isn't enough to see clearly).

The honest ceiling on what this guide can do.

Five trigger swaps are useful but not complete. About two-thirds of bloat is FODMAP-related, and there are six FODMAP groups, not five — this guide covers the most common hidden ones, but the comprehensive elimination protocol covers all six over a structured 14-day window with a 14-day reintroduction phase to find your specific personal triggers.

The other one-third of bloat is motility-related, hypersensitivity-related, or SIBO-related. None of those respond to FODMAP elimination, but they all respond to other interventions that this guide doesn't cover.

If you do the swaps in this guide and feel better — that's a result. If you don't feel better, or if your bloat is severe enough that even partial relief isn't enough, the full FLATLINE protocol covers the rest.

▣ **FLATLINE**

IF THIS WAS USEFUL

The full 30-day reset.

This guide covered five common hidden triggers. **FLATLINE Vol. 01 — The 30-Day Bloat Reset** covers all six FODMAP groups, a complete 14-day elimination + 14-day reintroduction protocol, motility work, the gut-brain axis, three case studies, twelve common mistakes, and a daily tracker.

56 pages. Read in an evening. Run for 30 days. The 14-day money-back guarantee is real.

Most readers feel a clear shift by day 5–7. By day 30 you have a personal trigger map — the 2 to 4 specific foods (out of dozens) that actually drive your bloat.

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