

MMC FACT SHEET 906

SPECIFIC CARBOHYDRATE DIET

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The Specific Carbohydrate Diet (or SCD) was developed by paediatrician Dr. Sidney Haas on behalf of biochemist and cell scientist Elaine Gottschall, author of a popular book on Intestinal Health. It has been used successfully by many people to treat:

- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Irritable Bowel
- Coeliac disease
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Chronic Diarrhoea
- Candidiasis.

The premise of the diet is that damaged intestinal walls and bacterial overgrowth are a part of a vicious cycle that wrecks havoc with the body's health and immunity. The diet restricts the type of carbohydrates that feed these bacteria, thereby restoring the body's inner ecology. Elaine Gottschall's book, *Breaking the Vicious Cycle: Intestinal Health through Diet*, offers more in depth coverage, tips, and recipes about successfully using the Specific Carbohydrate Diet. (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specific_Carbohydrate_Diet and <http://www.scdiet.org>)

This strict but useful grain-free, lactose-free, and sucrose-free dietary regimen combats bacterial and yeast overgrowth by restricting the energy they require to live, while keeping the host (us) well fed. Foods eaten must have few or no carbohydrates, or contain monosaccharides which are quickly absorbed by the body. A list of allowed and disallowed foods is provided on page 2. If you are unsure about a particular food, DO NOT EAT IT. Strict adherence is necessary to obtain relief from symptoms.

How it works: Of all dietary components, carbohydrates have the greatest influence on intestinal microbes (yeast and bacteria) which are believed to be involved in intestinal disorders. Most intestinal microbes require carbohydrates for energy. The SCD works by severely limiting the availability of carbohydrates to intestinal microbes. When carbohydrates are not digested, they are not absorbed. They remain in the intestinal tract, encouraging microbes to multiply by providing food for them. This can lead to the formation of acids and toxins which can injure the small intestine. Once bacteria multiply within the small intestine, they can destroy the enzymes on the intestinal cell surface, preventing carbohydrate digestion and absorption. At this point, production of excessive mucus may be triggered as the intestinal tract attempts to "lubricate" itself against the irritation caused by the toxins, acids, and the presence of incompletely digested and unabsorbed carbohydrates.

The SCD is based on the principle that specifically selected carbohydrates requiring minimal digestion are well absorbed, leaving virtually nothing for intestinal microbes to feed on. As the microbes decrease due to lack of food, their harmful by-products also diminish. No longer needing protection, the mucus-producing cells stop producing excessive mucus and carbohydrate digestion is improved. The SCD corrects malabsorption, allowing nutrients to enter the bloodstream and be made available to the cells of the body, thereby strengthening the immune system's ability to fight. Further debilitation is prevented, weight can return to normal, and ultimately there is a return to health.

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SCD Food List

Disallowed Foods (do not eat)

- Sugars:** Sugar, molasses, sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, fructose, any processed sugar.
- Veggies:** Canned vegetables.
- Grains:** All grains, ie corn, wheat, wheat germ, barley, oats, rye, rice, buckwheat, soy, and others.
Some legumes: chick peas, bean sprouts, soybeans, mungbeans, fava beans, and garbanzo beans.
- Starchy foods:** Potatoes, yams, and parsnips.
- Seaweed and seaweed byproducts,** such as agar and carrageenan,
- Meats:** All canned meats are forbidden. Most processed meats will contain corn, corn products, starch, or sugar, so are not allowed.
- Dairy:** All variations of milk: whole, trim, chocolate, cream, buttermilk, and sour cream. Yoghurt and some cheeses which contain a high lactose content are restricted: ricotta, mozzarella, cottage cheese, cream cheese, feta, and processed cheeses and cheese spreads.
- Other foods** that are not permitted include: bread, pasta, other starchy foods, canola oil, commercial mayonnaise (because of additives), ice cream, sweets, chocolate, carob, whey powder, margarine, commercial ketchup, stevia, baking powder, mixed nuts, and FOS (fructooligosaccharides) products.

Allowed Foods (unrestricted)

- Sugars:** Honey is the only allowed sugar product. Not everyone can tolerate it, so use with caution.
- Veggies:** Most vegetables, fresh or frozen and raw or cooked, are allowed including: asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, artichokes, beetroot, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, zucchini, summer squash, rhubarb, peppers, garlic, lettuce, spinach, mushrooms (unless you have candidiasis), onions, turnips, and watercress. Be wary of raw vegetables if you have diarrhoea.
- Legumes:** Dried navy beans, lentils, peas, split peas, unroasted cashews, peanuts in a shell, all natural peanut butter, lima beans, and green beans.
- Meats:** All unprocessed meats: beef, pork, chicken, turkey, quail, ostrich, fish, shellfish, lamb, venison, rabbit, and eggs. Some processed meats are permissible but will often require writing of letters to manufacturers to verify the absence of restricted foods (sugar, starch, and corn products).
- Dairy:** All natural cheeses (except those listed above as disallowed) - cheddar, colby, swiss, havarti. Homemade yogurt that has been fermented for a minimum of 24 hours is allowed and encouraged.
- Fruits:** Most fruits are allowed: avocados, apples, tomatoes, olives, apricots, ripened bananas, coconuts, dates, berries, cherries, citrus fruits, peaches, pears, tropical fruits, and grapes.
- Nuts:** Almonds, Brazil nuts, walnuts, chestnuts, and pecans.
- Other:** These are also allowed: olive oil, coconut oil, soybean oil, corn oil, weak tea, weak coffee, unflavored gelatin, mustard, vinegar, saccharin, and juices with no additives.



