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Foreword

Years ago, as a gastroenterology fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles, I was amazed to learn that millions of people in the US suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Since completing my fellowship, I've treated many patients with IBS and have seen firsthand the suffering they silently endure. Due to how easily the condition can be exacerbated, IBS is one of the most common conditions that results in visits—often frequent—to clinics and hospital emergency rooms.

I now know that diet plays a major role in instigating or aggravating IBS symptoms, but my medical training did not offer any information on dietary interventions for managing gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, including IBS. I advised my IBS patients to eat less greasy food and more fiber, but I became increasingly frustrated as I saw that this simple advice did not help them in the long run. Finally, the FODMAP-restricted diet, tested in several high-quality clinical trials, came to my attention. Although the results have not been uniformly positive, we know that quality of life measures significantly improve in IBS patients who have followed a FODMAP-restricted diet.

I met Mollie Tunitsky in our GI clinic a few years ago. She had consulted with several local GI specialists about her IBS symptoms and hadn't experienced any substantial improvement. I approached her with a holistic plan to treat IBS with diet, as well as other interventions. She jumped on it and followed the “new” low-FODMAP dietary regimen with the help of Gabriela Gardner, our clinic's registered dietitian nutritionist. Mollie slowly and steadily improved to her “near-normal” status. As Mollie's physician, I am rewarded to know that she is now publishing a book with Gabriela to bring recipes and relief to others.

Although people suffering from IBS are desperate to make a change, they sometimes get the message that a low-FODMAP diet is “too complicated” or “too cumbersome.” This book will simply connect with those who are apprehensive about getting started. I read the book intently and believe that it will be a wonderful resource not only for IBS sufferers but also for physicians treating these patients. Although a FODMAP-restricted diet is not a panacea for treating this debilitating



Above: Chicken Piccata, page 102

condition, it certainly helps in several ways, as Mollie notes in the first chapter. I sincerely hope that after reading this book, people who suffer from IBS will incorporate a medically safe, enjoyable, and delicious FODMAP-restricted diet in their daily routine to substantially improve their quality of life.

Have a hearty and healthy meal!

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Introduction

Ever since college, I've had digestive issues, which have ranged on the spectrum from mild to severe. Sometimes they'd be slightly annoying; sometimes I'd have to cancel plans and lie in the fetal position on the living-room couch. There was a lot of anxiety associated with my stomach; I was constantly worried about getting sick while out of the house. I saw a multitude of different gastroenterologists who diagnosed me with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), but they only asked if I was stressed out, and offered few to no solutions. I even had one doctor tell me to stop eating all fruits and vegetables as one solution. When I asked what I should eat instead, he looked at me like I was the crazy one!

A few years ago, I decided to take my health into my own hands and saw a new gastroenterologist who introduced me to something called the low-FODMAP diet. He also recommended I work with his dietitian. It was the first time in all my years of suffering that someone was interested in what I was eating and how much, instead of just pushing medications at me. I prided myself (I thought) on eating healthy, but it turns out some of those “healthy” foods like apples and cauliflower were high-FODMAP items. After completing the elimination diet, I realized it was those types of foods that were making me feel so sick for all these years.

This is where the low-FODMAP diet and my digestive evolution came into play. It turned my life right-side up in the best way possible, and now I know the same can happen for you. I'm excited for you to dive in and find stomach relief just like I did—probably much more quickly than you ever thought possible!

The goal of this seven-day approach is to avoid all high-FODMAP foods for the entire seven days and see what a difference it makes for your gastrointestinal health. In just one week, you should start to see powerful results and relief. You'll start to understand how your specific issues with IBS, IBD, or general GI sensitivity are triggered—and what you can do to fix them.