

# Stamps on foods help IBS sufferers choose wisely

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A certification stamp on packaged foods to help irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) sufferers choose foods that don't trigger their symptoms is being adopted by the food industry, in a collaborative program with Monash University researchers.

Bread products displaying the stamp will be available in selected bakeries with initial partners of the Monash University Low FODMAP Certification Program - Bodhi's Bakehouse, Morpeth Sourdough, and Naturis Organic Breads – specifically creating the first low FODMAP

sourdough spelt breads, suitable to people on a low FODMAP diet.

Long-term Monash University research has shown a diet low in foods belonging to a family of carbohydrates, FODMAPs, effectively reduces symptoms of IBS for at least 75 per cent of sufferers. FODMAPs are poorly absorbed by the digestive tract. High FODMAP foods include wheat, rye, onions and garlic.

Researchers have now tested the FODMAP content of hundreds of foods over the past decade.

In 2008, while testing the FODMAP content of different breads, the researchers discovered that bread made from spelt (an ancient form of wheat) was lower in FODMAPs than modern wheat bread.

This finding led the researchers to collaborate with [food](#) industry - George Weston Foods and some small artisan bakers - to create low FODMAP sourdough spelt breads. Key to ensuring the breads were low in FODMAPs, was the use of a spelt $\alpha$ , a flour developed by Weston Milling, and the use of traditional, long-fermentation sourdough processes.

The first products to display the certification stamp will be spelt sourdough breads:

- Spelt 2, Bodhi's Bakehouse;
- Spelt Sourdough, Morpeth Sourdough; and
- Wholemeal Spelt bread and Wholemeal Spelt Chia & Sunflower Seeds Bread, Naturis Organics Breads.

These breads will be available from selected bakeries in various parts of Australia and customers are advised to contact the bakeries directly for details.

Dr Jane Muir from the Department of Gastroenterology said the Low FODMAP Certification Program translated the science of the groundbreaking Monash University Low FODMAP Diet into practice, making it easier for the one-in-seven adults who suffer from IBS to identify and select low FODMAP food choices.

"This program will make it easier for IBS sufferers to identify low FODMAP food choices on the supermarket shelves," Dr Muir said.

"It will also assure IBS sufferers, that products displaying the certification stamp, are both nutritious and low in FODMAPs.

"There is growing awareness among both health professionals and the public, of the critical role that a low FODMAP diet plays in managing IBS symptoms. By collaborating with [food industry](#), Monash is able to bring their scientific research to life in a practical way.

"Food industry has expressed great interest in the Monash University Low FODMAP Certification Program, and we expect there will be many more products displaying the stamp over the coming months."

Researchers at Monash University were the first in the world to measure the majority of FODMAPs in food and now have a comprehensive database of FODMAP content in food.

It is hoped the certification stamp will be extended into major Australian supermarket chains and globally in the near future.

## **The Monash University Low FODMAP Diet App**

To assist in the translation of their research findings, Monash researchers have created an app that provides detailed and accurate information regarding foods that may trigger IBS symptoms, and low FODMAP

alternatives. The App uses a traffic light system, whereby high FODMAP foods (best avoided) are highlighted in red, while low FODMAP foods (safe to include) are highlighted in green. The App will be utilised in the certification program, whereby products displaying the certification stamp will have a green light against their branding, to clearly indicate to consumers that the food is low in FODMAPs. This information will make it even easier for consumers with IBS, to identify foods that are suitable to eat on a low FODMAP diet.

The app has reached number one in the medical category in the App Store in Australia, and 41 other countries. Monash will release multiple language versions with local foods in 2015 to accommodate the overwhelming interest received from the United States, Asia and Europe.

Provided by Monash University

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