

## SO I HAVE SIBO, NOW WHAT?

Please note: This handout is meant for general information and is not intended to be used for medical advice. Please contact your medical provider to discuss specific recommendations for your own health.

A diagnosis of SIBO can be very confusing and overwhelming. Since SIBO is a fairly new concept in medicine, there is not a lot of data we can rely on regarding various treatment options. The good news is that there are currently many studies and trials underway regarding SIBO and our understanding of how to diagnose and treat different types of SIBO is improving and we get more and more data. Additionally, many of the adjunctive treatment options available, such as breathing excises and dietary changes, are very safe to try.

Your doctor will discuss treatment options with you based on your SIBO breath test results clinical picture, preferences, history and risk factors. The options typically include antibiotics, herbs or an elemental diet for hydrogen positive SIBO. The presence of methane may alter the treatment options a little bit. Once a treatment option is determined, it can always be changed or adjusted depending on your response. After a successful SIBO treatment, you will enter what we call the “maintenance phase”, where we typically use botanical to prevent future SIBO recurrence so following up after treatment is important. It is also important to note that recurrence is common and is part of the process long term SIBO treatment. While everyone responds a to treatment differently, SIBO treatment can feel like 2 steps forward, one step back process for some. The more patience you can have with the process the better.

Most people should consider doing all of the following in addition to antimicrobial SIBO treatment:

1. Begin a low FODMAP diet. This diet helps reduce the amount of fermentable carbohydrates in your diet. Fermentable carbohydrates feed bacteria and are typically associated with worsening SIBO symptoms. This diet may not be as helpful in methanogenic bloom alone (also known as methane positive SIBO). We recommend at least 1 visit to our nutrition department to discuss the low FODMAP diet and HIGHLY recommend using the Monash [University Low FODMAP diet app](#).
2. Space your meals. The small intestine must be in a fasting state in order to send cleaning waves (called the migrating motor complex) to empty out food. Without period of fasting, there is minimal time for the migrating motor complex to activate, leading to stagnant food that provides fuel for microbiota to ferment. This fermentation can result in gas production and increased SIBO symptoms. In SIBO treatment, we typically recommend fasting for 4-5 hours between meals. Fasting for 12 hours at night can also have additional benefits. Fluids such as coffee water and tea can be consumed during fasting, as long as there is nothing added to them.
3. Start a daily practice of vagal nerve stimulation. The following are good options and can be done alone or in combination:
  - Diaphragmatic breathing where you exhale is longer than your inhale. Inhale to the count of 4, inhale to the count of 8. Do this for 5-10 minutes 2-3 times per day.
  - Gargling (do this for 2-3 minutes 2-3 times per day)

- Humming or singing
- Meditation
- Splash cold water on your face

4. Consider starting at least one of the following on a regular (weekly if possible) basis:

- Yoga
- Visceral manipulation
- Biofeedback
- Acupuncture
- Contrast hydrotherapy

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