

Food for Thought:

Does the Specific Carbohydrate Diet Work?

A November 11, 2002 article in the *Wall Street Journal* called attention to a diet which IBD patients claim has solved their health problems. Many physicians, however, are skeptical of the results due to a lack of medical research to back the claims.



The Specific Carbohydrate Diet (SCD) was developed by Elaine Gottschall, who has a Master's in nutrition and biochemistry. Her daughter has IBD.

Ms. Gottschall theorizes that people with IBD cannot completely break down complex chains of carbohydrates. The partially broken down chains accumulate in the lower intestinal tract, where they cause growth of bacteria and yeast. This leads to a toxic condition that damages intestinal wall cells, triggering inflammation.

The SCD eliminates most complex carbohydrates such as processed sugars, grains and legumes. It allows consumption of homemade yogurt and most meats, fruits and vegetables. Even those doctors who prescribe the diet say it does not always work. In some cases, the disease is too advanced; in others the patients is unable to rigorously follow a diet that can be challenging and inconvenient.



If you are interested in exploring the SCD, please discuss it with your doctor before beginning the diet. To learn more about the SCD, visit: www.ucibs.org/longislandlist-serve.htm or scdiet.info. You might also read Ms. Gottschall's book *Breaking the Vicious Cycle: Intestinal Health Through Diet*.

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SCD Do's and Don'ts

The following list includes some of the foods allowed and disallowed by the SCD:

Do's

- Homemade yogurt that has been fermented for a minimum of 24 hours is allowed and encouraged
- Honey (not everyone can tolerate it, use with caution.)
- Most fresh, frozen, raw or cooked vegetables
- Legumes: Dried navy beans, lentils, peas, split peas, unroasted cashews, peanuts in a shell, all natural peanut butter, lima beans and string beans
- Unprocessed beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, fish, shellfish and eggs
- All natural cheeses excepts those listed below
- Most fruit and nuts



Don'ts

- No ricotta, mozzarella, cream cheese, cottage cheese, feta or processed cheeses
- No sugars: includes molasses, sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, fructose or any processed sugar
- No canned vegetables
- No grains
- No chick peas, bean sprouts, soybeans, mungbeans, fava beans or garbanzo beans
- No starchy foods
- No seaweed or seaweed byproducts
- No canned meats (most processed meats are not permitted)
- No dairy, including commercial yogurt

