

# GAPS Diet Guidelines

## What is the GAPS diet?

The GAPS (Gut and Psychology Syndrome) diet is a specific approach used for healing certain digestive and brain disorders. It's a subset of the Paleo diet with the main distinction of forbidding starchy plants. This means avoiding or significantly restricting potatoes, sweet potatoes, plantains, yuca, taro, and all grains, including white rice.

The GAPS diet is not intended as a long-term approach. Most patients are able to safely add starchy vegetables back into their diet once their gut health is stabilized and their initial symptoms have decreased significantly.

## Who is the GAPS diet for?

It's recommended for certain subsets of patients, particularly those with heartburn, GERD, and IBD.

## GAPS diet specifics

The GAPS diet is similar to the customized Paleo diet, with the following distinctions:

- It restricts all sources of starch (e.g., sweet potatoes, potatoes, plantains, etc.).
- It emphasizes the use of fermented foods and meat stock to restore healthy gut microbiota and gut barrier integrity.
- It permits dairy products that contain little or no lactose, such as butter, ghee, homemade kefir and yogurt, hard cheeses, and fermented cream. Milk, soft cheeses, and unfermented cream are not permitted.
- The GAPS diet begins with an introductory period that allows only meat, fish, meat stock, ginger tea, and small amounts of fermented foods and progresses through several stages, concluding with the "full GAPS diet," which is much less restrictive.

The GAPS diet requires a significant investment of time and energy, but the results are often well worth the effort. It can be an effective therapeutic approach, particularly for children with behavioral disorders.

## GAPS diet downsides

The main downside comes from following the introductory phase for too long. This phase is very low in fermentable fiber, which can starve the gut flora. This is good in terms of pathogenic gut bacteria, but it also starves beneficial bacteria.

Patient who are getting declining benefits and health can often improve by adding more fermentable fiber back into their diet. It is recommended to use GAPS during initial stages of recovery and then start adding some starchy plants and other fermentable fibers back into the diet.

## GAPS Introductory Phase

(Full details can be found at <http://www.gapsdiet.com/>)

### STAGE 1

- Homemade meat or fish stock
  - Can be put into soup with probiotics and/or boiled meats
- Probiotic foods
  - Vegetable or dairy based
  - Start with one to two teaspoons for two to five days, then three to four teaspoons a day for two to five days until patient can tolerate adding to every meal of stock or soup
- Ginger tea with honey between meals

### STAGE 2

- Add raw organic egg yolks
  - Added to stock or soup
  - Start with one per day and increase to one per meal
  - Go to soft boiled once yolks well tolerated
  - No need to limit the number of yolks per day once tolerated
- Add stews and casseroles made with meats and vegetables
  - Make sure to keep fat content high
- Increase juices from sauerkraut and/or fermented vegetables
- Introduce fermented fish
  - Start at once per day and gradually increase
- Introduce homemade ghee
  - Start at one teaspoon per day and gradually increase

### STAGE 3

- Add ripe avocado
  - Mash into soups, starting from one to three teaspoons and gradually increasing the amount
- Add pancakes: Make these pancakes with three ingredients: 1) organic nut butter (almond, walnut, peanut, etc.); 2) eggs; 3) a piece of fresh winter squash or zucchini (peeled, de-seeded, and well blended in a food processor)
- Egg scrambled with plenty of ghee, goose fat, or duck fat
- Introduce sauerkraut and fermented vegetables

#### **STAGE 4**

- Gradually add meats cooked by roasting and grilling (but not barbecued or fried yet)
- Introduce cold-pressed olive oil
- Introduce freshly pressed juices, such as carrot, celery, lettuce, and mint
- Try homemade bread made with a flour of ground almonds (or any other ground nuts or seeds)

#### **STAGE 5**

- If all the previous foods are well tolerated, try to add cooked apple as an apple purée
- Add raw vegetables starting from softer parts of lettuce and peeled cucumber
- If the juice made from carrot, celery, lettuce, and mint is well tolerated, start adding fruit to it: apple, pineapple, and mango. Avoid citrus fruit at this stage