Background: IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) is a functional gastrointestinal disorder, and is a common disorder in the western population. The predominant symptoms are diarrhoea, abdominal pain, bloating, constipation, and excessive flatus. Today there are no evidence based recommendations concerning dietary factors for patients diagnosed with IBS, but recently certain factors in the diet that seems to trigger the symptoms have been identified. These factors are short-chain carbohydrates, Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides, and Polyols (FODMAPS), which are not completely absorbed in the lumen.

Objective: The purpose of this systematic review article is to examine whether there are any evidence that a diet low in FODMAPs may induce improvement of symptoms in patients diagnosed with IBS.

Search strategy: The literature search was performed in the databases PubMed, Scopus, Summon and Google Scholar. The keywords were “Irritable bowel syndrome + FODMAPs”, “Irritable bowel syndrome + diet” and “FODMAP and diet”.

Selection criteria: The inclusion criteria were patients diagnosed with IBS between the ages 18 and 69. The exclusion criteria were surgery made in the gastrointestinal tract, other gastrointestinal dysfunctions and pregnancy.

Data collection and analysis: Five relevant articles were found whereas two of them didn’t match the chosen selection criteria and were therefore excluded. The remaining articles were examined according to SBU guidelines. The evidence of the three chosen endpoints bloating, abdominal pain and flatulence were then examined according to the SBU guidelines.

Main results: According to two RCTs there are moderate evidence that a dietary treatment low in FODMAPs gives symptom improvements in flatulence and bloating. A cohort study shows low evidence for the same endpoints. According to all the examined studies, there is low evidence that a dietary treatment low in FODMAPs improves abdominal pain for patients with IBS.

Conclusions: A dietary treatment low in FODMAPs is relevant for symptom improvements of flatulence and bloating. However, the dietary treatment should be individualized, and more research is needed in this area of concern.