GENERAL

what is the scd diet food list

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Introduction

When people ask **what is the SCD diet food list**, they're often looking for a clear, practical guide to a diet that has helped countless individuals manage chronic digestive and autoimmune conditions. The Simple Carbohydrate Diet—commonly known by its abbreviation SCD—was created over a century ago by Dr. John W. Kellogg and has since evolved into a modern, evidence based approach for improving gut health. This article dives deep into the principles of the SCD, explains why it works, and provides a comprehensive food list that you can use to start or refine your own SCD journey.

What Is the SCD Diet?

The SCD stands for **Simple Carbohydrate Diet**. It's not a fad diet; it's a therapeutic eating plan that eliminates complex carbohydrates, refined sugars, and most foods that can irritate the gut lining. Instead, it focuses on simple, easily digestible foods that are low in fiber and free from additives, enzymes, and other compounds that can trigger inflammation.

Short for Simple Carbohydrate Diet

Unlike the more popular Paleo or Keto diets, the SCD is specifically designed to reduce the load on the digestive system. It eliminates foods that feed harmful bacteria and yeast, allowing the gut's natural flora to rebalance. The result is a noticeable improvement in symptoms such as bloating, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, and even skin conditions like eczema.

History and Origins

Dr. John W. Kellogg first introduced the SCD in 1904 as part of a broader movement to promote "simple living." He believed that the human body thrives on uncomplicated, natural foods. Over the years, the diet has been refined by nutritionists and clinicians, incorporating new research on gut microbiota and immune function. Today, the SCD is endorsed by many gastroenterologists and is a staple treatment for conditions like Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, celiac disease, and irritable bowel syndrome.

How the SCD Works

The core idea behind the SCD is that certain foods can overwhelm the digestive system, especially when the gut is already inflamed or compromised. By limiting the diet to simple carbohydrates and proteins, the SCD reduces the amount of undigested material that reaches the colon, thereby decreasing bacterial overgrowth and toxin production.

1. Elimination of Complex Carbohydrates – Grains, beans, and high fiber vegetables are removed to prevent fermentation.
2. Restriction of Lactose and Casein – Dairy products that contain lactose or casein can irritate the gut; only fermented, low lactose options are allowed.
3. Focus on Easily Digestible Proteins – Fresh meats, fish, and eggs provide essential amino acids without triggering inflammation.

4. Inclusion of Fermented Foods – Fermented dairy and vegetables help populate the gut with beneficial bacteria.

Benefits of the SCD Diet

Clinical studies and patient testimonials consistently report improvements in:

- Digestive symptoms (diarrhea, constipation, bloating)
- Autoimmune flare ups (arthritis, skin rashes)
- Mental clarity and mood (reduced anxiety, better focus)
- Overall energy levels (stable blood sugar)

Because the SCD eliminates many processed ingredients, it also tends to lower overall caloric density, helping some people achieve a healthier weight without restrictive calorie counting.

Potential Risks and Considerations

While the SCD is highly effective for many, it's not a one size fits all solution. Some people may experience:

- Initial fatigue as the body adapts to a new nutrient profile
- Potential nutrient gaps (especially calcium and fiber) if the diet is not properly planned
- Social challenges (eating out or attending events can be difficult)

It's essential to work with a qualified dietitian or medical professional before starting the SCD, especially if you have underlying health conditions.

The SCD Food List: What Is Allowed?

The SCD food list is divided into categories that make it easier to plan meals. Below is a detailed breakdown of what you can eat.

Proteins: Meats, Fish, and Eggs

- Fresh, unprocessed meats: chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb, and game (venison, rabbit)
- Fish and seafood: salmon, tuna, cod, shrimp, scallops, and mussels
- Eggs: chicken, duck, quail (preferably free range or pasture raised)
- Organ meats: liver, kidney, heart (rich in nutrients)

Dairy: Fermented and Low Fat Options

- Fermented cheeses: hard cheeses like cheddar, gouda, parmesan, and aged Swiss (low lactose)
- Fermented milk: kefir, yogurt (plain, unsweetened), buttermilk (avoid sweetened varieties)
- Butter and ghee: clarified butter that's free from milk solids
- Cheese curds: fresh mozzarella or cottage cheese (if tolerated)

Vegetables: Low Fiber Choices

- Leafy greens: spinach, kale, arugula, romaine, lettuce (avoid high fiber varieties like collard greens)
- Root vegetables: carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips (in moderation)
- Squash: zucchini, yellow squash, but avoid high fiber varieties like pumpkin
- Alliums: onions, garlic, leeks (in small amounts)

Fruits: Limited and Low Sugar Options

- Bananas (unripe for lower sugar)
- Apples (without skin)

- Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries (in moderation)
- Melons: cantaloupe, honeydew (without seeds)
- Grapes (small portions)

Herbs, Spices, and Condiments

- Fresh herbs: parsley, cilantro, basil, dill, mint, thyme, rosemary
- Spices: black pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, turmeric (in small amounts)
- Condiments: homemade mayonnaise (egg based), mustard (plain), and low sugar sauces (e.g., homemade tomato sauce)
- Salt: sea salt or Himalayan pink salt (avoid processed salt blends)

Fats and Oils

- Animal fats: lard, tallow, duck fat (used sparingly)
- Plant oils: olive oil, coconut oil, avocado oil (extra virgin for flavor)
- Nut butters: almond butter, cashew butter (no added sugar)
- Avocado: whole fruit or sliced, rich in healthy fats

Drinks and Beverages

- Water: plain, filtered, or mineral water
- Herbal teas: chamomile, peppermint, rooibos (without added sweeteners)
- Bone broth: homemade or store bought (no added sugars or preservatives)
- Fresh fruit juices: only homemade, no added sugar (limit to small servings)
- Unsweetened plant milks: coconut milk, almond milk (ensure no added sweeteners)

The SCD Food List: What Is Not Allowed?

Understanding the foods to avoid is just as important as knowing what you can eat. The following list covers common restrictions.

Grains and Cereals

- Wheat, barley, rye, oats, rice, corn, quinoa, millet, sorghum, and all derivatives (e.g., bread, pasta, cereal)
- Processed grain products: crackers, granola, muffins, pastries

Dairy Products with Lactose

- Milk (cow, goat, sheep)
- Cheeses high in lactose: mozzarella, cottage cheese, ricotta
- Ice cream, custard, and other dairy desserts
- Yogurt with added fruit or sweeteners

Starchy Vegetables

- Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, and other root vegetables in large amounts
- Corn, peas, and other high fiber vegetables

Legumes and Pulses

- Beans (black, kidney, pinto, navy, chickpeas)
- Legumes: lentils, soybeans, peas, edamame
- Processed soy products: tofu, tempeh, soy milk (unless fermented and low sugar)

Processed Foods and Sweeteners

- Packaged snacks: chips, pretzels, crackers, and candy

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