

Symptom Pattern Comparison Worksheet

Use this worksheet before you assume IBS, SIBO, or food intolerance.

The goal is not to diagnose yourself. The goal is to show the pattern more clearly.

1. What happened?

Question	Your Notes
What symptoms showed up?	
When did they start after eating?	
How long did they last?	
Was this a one-off or part of an ongoing pattern?	

2. Was there one obvious trigger?

Question	Your Notes
Was one food or food group clearly involved?	
Did the same food trigger symptoms on more than one occasion?	
Did the amount matter?	
Were symptoms worse with lactose, fructose, sugar alcohols, or another repeat trigger?	

3. Does the pattern feel broader than one food?

Question	Yes / No / Unsure
Do symptoms happen with many different meals?	
Do stress, sleep, travel, or schedule changes affect symptoms too?	
Do you have ongoing constipation, diarrhea, or both across the week?	
Does abdominal pain repeat even when no single food stands out?	

If you answered "yes" to several of these, the pattern may be broader than a single food intolerance.

4. Are there SIBO-style context clues?

Question	Yes / No / Unsure
Has a clinician already raised SIBO as a possibility?	
Do you have a history of GI surgery, slowed motility, diabetes, or opioid use?	
Do broad fermentable foods seem to trigger symptoms rather than one narrow food?	

Have symptoms stayed confusing despite careful low-FODMAP work?	
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These answers do not prove SIBO. They help decide whether the topic deserves discussion.

5. Red flags to stop self-sorting and get checked

Check any that apply:

- Blood in stool
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fever
- Anemia
- New or worsening symptoms later in life
- Severe ongoing pain
- Persistent vomiting

If any box is checked, move clinician review higher than food experimentation.

6. Questions to bring to a clinician

- Does my pattern fit IBS criteria?
- Do I need celiac screening or other basic rule-out tests?
- Does SIBO testing make sense in my case, or not really?
- Does this look more like a specific food intolerance?
- What should I track before changing my diet further?

7. Short interpretation guide

- **Looks more like food intolerance:** one repeat trigger, dose matters, pattern is narrow.
- **Looks more like IBS:** chronic pain plus bowel pattern change, broader triggers, no single food explains everything.
- **SIBO deserves discussion:** broad fermentation-style flares plus overgrowth context or persistent low-FODMAP failure.

Use this worksheet to support a better conversation, not a premature label.