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## **Fazer research: The low-FODMAP diet is still relatively unknown in Finland, even though it might provide a solution for people with digestive problems**

**A study commissioned by Fazer shows that one in three Finns experiences food-related stomach problems at least once a week. An easily upset stomach seems to be a particularly common issue among young women. A low-FODMAP diet may help to soothe a sensitive stomach, yet it is still a relatively unknown solution in Finland. People with a sensitive stomach often avoid eating bread. However, Fazer's new Vatsaystävällinen\* product family offers bread options that are suitable for a sensitive stomach and compatible with a low-FODMAP diet.**

Stomach problems are a common issue in Finland. According to a study commissioned by Fazer, non-specific digestive symptoms affect the lives of young women in particular: half (51%) of Finnish women under the age of 35 report having food-related stomach problems at least once a week. Out of the entire Finnish population, one third (34%) experiences digestive discomfort at least once a week.

Stomach problems also have a number of negative consequences. In the study, the most commonly reported issues were disturbing gas (37%), uncomfortable abdominal swelling (27%), feeling tired and sluggish (21%), having to give up favourite foods such as rye bread (17%) and additional stress (16%).

The low-FODMAP diet, which focuses on the quality of the carbohydrates consumed, is an increasingly popular solution to the problems caused by a sensitive stomach. The idea behind the low-FODMAP diet is to avoid carbohydrates that are poorly absorbed in the small intestine and quickly fermented in the large intestine. These FODMAP carbohydrates are typically found in foods such as rye, wheat, mushrooms, onions, broccoli and honey. Many people find the diet effective in soothing an easily upset stomach in the short term. However, the study shows that only one in six Finns (15%) knows what the low-FODMAP diet is, even though it might provide a solution to their own discomfort.

**Having a sensitive stomach does not necessarily mean giving up bread**



Bread – especially rye bread – plays a central role in Finnish food culture. Indeed, rye bread was recently selected as Finland’s national food. Based on Fazer’s study, however, one in every five Finns (20%) has had to cut their consumption of bread due to digestive problems. For women, the number is even higher: one in three women (33%) has restricted the amount of bread in their diet to relieve digestive discomfort.

Out of the people who reported having uncomfortable digestive symptoms every week, almost half (41%) had reduced their consumption of bread. People with a sensitive stomach may experience that rye and wheat breads cause stomach symptoms to them. This may be because rye and wheat bread contain fructans. Fazer has developed new breads that are gentler on the stomach and are suitable for low-FODMAP diet. The product family is called Vatsaystävällinen\*, stomach-friendly.

“Finns love bread: in our latest Big Bread Study, nine out of ten Finns felt that fresh bread is a true pleasure,” says **Noora Pöyhönen**, Vice President, Marketing and Portfolio, Fazer Bakery Finland.

However, there are also a lot of people in Finland who suffer from digestive discomfort or a sensitive stomach.

“Luckily, this does not mean having to give up bread entirely. Our bread portfolio includes the Vatsaystävällinen\* product family that is suitable for people with a sensitive stomach and even those following a low-FODMAP diet. The product family includes gluten-free and oat breads, as well as the age-old Finnish favourite: rye bread,” Pöyhönen explains.

Fazer Vatsaystävällinen\* breads do not contain wheat. They are rich in fibre and contain plenty of seeds, as well as healthy fatty acids. Vatsaystävällinen\* Ruis is the world’s first rye bread compatible with a low-FODMAP diet.

#### **Further information:**

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#### **Fazer Group**

*Fazer is an international family enterprise offering bakery, confectionery and biscuit as well as grain products, vegetable-based meals, milk-free products, take-away food and drinks as well as catering and café services. Fazer’s mission is Food with a purpose. Fazer has operations in eight countries and it exports products to some 40 countries. Fazer’s success since its*



*establishment in 1891 has been based on the best quality of products and services, beloved brands, skilful people and a responsible way of working. Fazer Group's turnover in 2017 was EUR 1.6 billion, and the company employs nearly 15,000 people. Fazer complies with ethical principles based on its values and the principles of the UN's Global Compact.*

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**Study information:**

FODMAP-tutkimus (FODMAP study) 2018

IROResearch Oy conducted the "Tuhat suomalaista" (1,000 Finns) survey by collecting data online via the company's own national consumer panel.

To make the sample representative of the entire Finnish population, it was weighted by age and gender, as well as the type and region of the respondent's place of residence.

The total number of respondents was 1,000.

The data was collected between 26 November and 3 December 2018.

The maximum statistical margin of error was approximately +3.2 percentage points.

Big Bread Study 2017

The study was carried out by Red Note Oy via online interviews.

The total number of respondents was 879. The output sample was representative of Finland as a whole.

The interviews were conducted in February 2017.