

ELIMINATION DIET INFORMATION

The elimination diet is a tried and true naturopathic method for testing for food allergies. A food allergy can manifest as anything from irritable bowel syndrome and severe hay fever type symptoms to skin problems or a general unshakable malaise. Due to the fact that food sensitivities can show such a range of obvious to mild symptoms, it is important to follow the elimination diet as closely as possible and to pay close attention to any changes in how you feel when you are testing potential allergen foods. The Gold Standard of the classic Elimination Diet is a Water Fast but this is difficult and dangerous and is usually done over 4 weeks in a hospital where you can be monitored. In lieu of that the following is recommended:

The Diet

It is OK to eat/drink only the following foods:

- Rice in ANY form
- Turkey, white meat chicken, lamb – as long as they are organic free range and without skins
- Wild caught salmon in small amounts
- Vegetables (including garlic and onions) with the following exceptions:
 - Tomatoes
 - Potatoes
 - Eggplant
 - Peppers
- Organic Pears and Blueberries
- Olive Oil
- Herbs (i.e. spices) are OK if there are no grains
- Water (no tea, note that even chamomile is very allergenic)
- IF you are a vegetarian note that there are no soy, eggs or beans allowed, so we may include pinto, black beans or lentils as a protein source.
- Avoid supplements and especially any immune stimulant medications if possible. Always check with your prescribing physician before discontinuing or tapering off any medication. If you are taking life-supporting medication such as thyroid medication, blood thinners, medications prescribed post heart-attack or stroke, do not discontinue.

Follow this standard diet for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for 14 days. It takes 2 weeks to rid the body of Antigen : Antibody complexes. Antigen : Antibody complexes are what your body holds on to that causes you to have reactions and symptoms. Gluten Antigen : Antibody complexes (mainly found in wheat) may take as long as 4 weeks, so if there is no reduction of symptoms after 2 weeks on the diet then think of Gluten as the possible allergen and continue on the elimination phase of the diet as above for 4 weeks. Then begin testing allergens.

Testing Allergens

After 2 weeks you will slowly reintegrate these five major allergens:

- Dairy (e.g. drink a whole glass of milk)
- Corn

- Soy
- Eggs
- Wheat (Gluten)

You will reintroduce each of the foods above one at a time. To reintroduce eat a substantial amount for half a day, then go back to the standard diet above for 3 full days. An example of a substantial amount is a large bowl of tofu and edamame stir-fry, 2-4 eggs, a full glass of whole milk etc. for breakfast, snack and lunch on your testing day. It can take up to 4 days to react, although it usually will happen within 12-24 hours. If there is no reaction after 4 days you are not sensitive to this food and you can add it back into your diet on the morning of the 5th day. Do this every 4 days until you test all five foods listed above.

Reintegrate the biggest craving first, as this is usually the worst allergen. This has to do with cerebral endorphins which are used to deal with inflammation, so what we want is usually what we are allergic to.

IF YOU HAVE **ASTHMA ONLY REINTRODUCE A LITTLE BIT AT A TIME OR THE SENSITIVE FOOD MAY TRIGGER AN ATTACK**

You can also add more foods to the reintroduction list if you think you might be sensitive to them. It's advisable to reintroduce anything that you crave or eat a lot of – usually this includes:

- Citrus – including Orange Juice
- Tomatoes
- Peanuts/nuts/peanut butter

Again follow the reintroduction guidelines above, reintroducing the food for a half day and then returning to the standard diet for three days thereafter. After 4 days - on the morning of the fifth day -you can add it back into the standard diet if there was no reaction.

How long will this take??!

This will take approximately 34 days accounting for 4 days for each of the five major allergens listed above – $5 \times 4 = 20$ days plus 14 days for the initial 2 weeks on the standard diet.

Avoid foods you react to for at least 2-3 months. After that time period you can try to reintroduce. Food sensitivities are somewhat like a glass full of water. The more allergens you put in the glass on a regular basis, the less it takes for the glass to overflow and for you to experience symptoms. If you avoid allergens for a period of time, your glass drains down to empty. When empty, a little bit of the allergenic food on a periodic basis might not even cause the glass to fill half-way. If you try a food you found yourself to be sensitive to 2-3 months later and there are no symptoms then it might be OK to eat that food once a week, but no more than 2-3 times a week if you have been sensitive to them. The key is moderation to keep that glass from overflowing again.