

Elimination-Challenge Diet

The elimination-challenge diet is intended to identify hidden food intolerances. The most common food irritants are removed for a period of time in order to rest the digestive system and reset inflammation. Then each food is slowly reintroduced as we watch for a reaction. Reactions indicate that the food is an irritant to your digestive system, so the food is to be avoided for the meantime. Eventually, all foods may be tolerated as the gut is healed. Ideally, to prevent future food intolerances, the long-term diet should be set up so that foods in the same family are not repeated within a 3-day period.

HOW TO

Suspected food intolerances and irritants are omitted from the diet for 2-6 weeks. The goal is to get to the point of either no symptoms, or drastic symptom reduction. Some people become free of symptoms after only 2 weeks, others need a full 6 weeks. More time may be needed to get to the point of an obvious reduction in symptoms. Avoid known food intolerances during this time, even if they aren't on the list (such as MSG or additives.)

Then introduce each food, one at a time, 3 days in a row, and apart from the other foods on the list. Eat one serving of the food with each meal for all three days. Be patient to give enough time to isolate adverse reactions. It may take 2 days to develop a reaction. Keep a written record of both physical and mental/behavioral reactions, as brain fog is a common negative food reaction.

If there's no reaction to the food after 3 days, this food is not considered an irritant and may be resumed in the diet.

If there's any adverse reaction to a food, remove it from the diet and wait to retry it until symptoms return to baseline. Retry the food to confirm whether there's a reaction. The reaction may be different the second time. If there's a reaction on the second challenge, this food should be avoided until the gut is fully healed. After any food reaction, wait to introduce another food until symptoms return to baseline. If possible, avoid taking anti-histamines or NSAID anti-inflammatories during the test period.

Avoid these common food irritants and intolerances:

Eggs	Soy
Dairy	Corn
Gluten	Cured meats
Wheat/flour made from wheat	Citrus
Yeast	Bananas
Shellfish	Dried fruit
Peanuts	Fermented foods
Nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, peppers, etc.)	

The following reactions may occur.

Skin reactions: Itching, burning, hives, red spots, sweating

Ear, Nose, and Throat: Sneezing, runny nose, sore or dry throat, hoarseness, ear ringing, dizziness

Eyes: Blurring, watering, pain, twitching, floaters, sensitivity to light, redness or swelling of lids

Respiratory: Wheezing, mucous formation, shortness of breath, tightness of chest, asthma aggravation

Cardiovascular: Pounding heart, increased heart rate, flushing, tingling, water retention, faintness

Gastrointestinal: Increased salivation, canker sores, indigestion, bloating, stomach ache, heartburn, colic, constipation, pain, diarrhea, gas, itching or burning of rectum or anus, weight gain

Genitourinary: Frequent, urgent or painful urination, inability to control bladder, perineal itching, discharge, or pain

Musculoskeletal: Fatigue, weakness, pain, swelling or stiffness of joints, backache, neck pain

Nervous System: Headache, migraine, drowsiness, inability to concentrate, depression, irritability, restlessness, hyperactivity, dizziness, numbness, pins and needles, tremors

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