



Fish Creek Naturopathic Medicine

Patient-Centred Holistic Medicine

380 Canyon Meadows Drive SE, Calgary, AB T2J 7C3

Phone: 403 271-4500 • Fax: 403 271-6500

ALLERGY ELIMINATION DIET

PURPOSE

To identify hidden food allergens that may be causing some or all of your symptoms. During the elimination period, all common allergens are completely eliminated from the diet for 2-3 weeks. After your symptoms improve, foods are added back, one at a time, to determine which foods provoke symptoms.

I. FOODS YOU MUST AVOID

- **DAIRY PRODUCTS** (milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, whey, casein, sodium caseinate, calcium caseinate, any food containing these)
- **WHEAT** (most breads, spaghetti, noodles, pasta, most flour, baked goods, durum semolina, farina, and many gravies, etc.)
- **CORN** (including any product with corn oil, vegetable oil from an unspecified source, corn syrup, corn sweetener, dextrose, glucose, corn chips, tortillas, popcorn)
- **CITRUS FRUITS** (oranges, grapefruits, lemons, limes, tangerines and foods containing citrus)
- **COFFEE, TEA, ALCOHOL** (Caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee, black tea (such as Lipton) and decaffeinated black tea. Herb teas are acceptable, except those containing citrus.)
- **REFINED SUGARS** (including table sugar and any foods that contain it such as candy, soda, pies, cake, cookies, etc. Other names for sugar include sucrose, glucose, dextrose, corn syrup, corn sweetener, fructose, maltose, and levulose. These must all be avoided. Some patients will be allowed 1-3 teaspoons per day of pure, unprocessed honey, maple syrup or barley malt. This will be decided on an individual bases. Those restricted from all sugars should not eat dried fruit. Others may sparingly eat unsulphered (organically grown) dried fruits.)
- **FOOD ADDITIVES** (including artificial colors, flavors, preservatives, texturing agents, artificial sweeteners, etc. Most diet sodas and other dietetic foods contain artificial ingredients and must be avoided. Grapes, prunes, and raisins that are not organically grown contain sulfites and must be avoided.)
- **ANY OTHER FOOD YOU EAT MORE THAN 3 TIMES PER WEEK** (Any food you are now eating 3 times a week or more should be avoided and tested later.)
- **KNOWN ALLERGENS** (Avoid any food you know you are allergic to, even if it is allowed on this diet.)

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Allergy Elimination Diet

- **TAP WATER** (includes cooking water) **ALLOWED** **NOT ALLOWED**
If tap water not allowed, use spring or distilled water bottled in glass or heavy plastic. Water bottled in soft, collapsible plastic containers tends to leach plastic into the water. Some water filtration systems do not take out all potential allergens. Take your water with you, including to work or restaurants.
- **READ LABELS!** Hidden allergens are frequently found in packaged foods. "Flour usually means wheat, "Vegetable oil" may mean corn oil, while casein and whey are dairy products.
- **MAKE SURE YOUR VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS ARE FREE OF WHEAT, CORN, SUGAR, CITRUS, YEAST AND ARTIFICIAL COLORINGS.**
- **VARY YOUR DIET, CHOOSING A WIDE VARIETY OF FOODS. DO NOT RELY ON JUST A FEW FOODS, AS YOU MAY BECOME ALLERGIC TO FOODS YOU EAT EVERY DAY!**

II. FOODS YOU MAY EAT

- **CEREALS** (HOT CEREALS: oatmeal, oat bran, cream of rye, Rice and Shine. DRY CEREALS: puffed rice, puffed millet, Oatio's (wheat-free), Good Shepherd (wheat-free), Crispy Brown Rice Cereal)
Diluted apple juice with apple slices and nuts go well on cereal. May use soymilk that has no corn oil added (some Eden Soy products). Please read the ingredients carefully. Also may use almond or nut milk. Most of these foods are available in health food stores.
- **GRAINS AND FLOUR PRODUCTS** (CRACKERS: 100% rice cakes, rice crackers or rye crackers. BREAD: 100% rye, spelt, rice or millet bread without dairy, eggs, sugar or wheat. PASTA/NOODLES: Oriental noodles such as 100% buckwheat soba noodles, spelt or rice noodles. FLOUR: Soy, rice, spelt, potato, buckwheat, and bean flours. COOKED WHOLE GRAINS: including oats, millet, barley, buckwheat groats (kasha), rice, brown rice, amaranth, quinoa. Most of these grains are available at health food stores.)
- **LEGUMES/BEANS** (Includes soybeans, tofu, lentils, peas, chickpeas, navy beans, kidney beans, black beans, string beans, and others. Dried beans should be soaked overnight. Pour off the water and rinse before cooking. Canned beans often contain added sugar or other potential allergens. Some cooked beans packaged in glass jars, sold at the health food stores, contain no sugar. Read labels. May also use bean dips without sugar, lemon, or additives. Canned soups include split pea and lentil soup without additives.)
- **VEGETABLES** (Use a wide variety. All vegetables except corn are permitted.)
- **FISH/MEAT/POULTRY** (Poultry, fowl, fresh fish packed in spring water. Shrimp and most canned or packaged shellfish such as lobster, crab, mussels and oysters may contain sulfites and should be avoided. Canned tuna, salmon and other canned fish are OK. Beef and pork may be eaten unless specified otherwise. Lamb rarely causes allergic reactions and may be used even when other meats are restricted.)
- **NUTS AND SEEDS** (Nuts and seeds, either raw or roasted without salt or sugar. To prevent rancidity, nuts and seeds should be kept in an air-tight container in the refrigerator. May also use nut butters from health food stores or from freshly ground nuts. This includes peanut butter if allowed, almond butter, cashew butter, walnut butter, sesame butter, and sesame tahini). Nut butters go well on celery sticks and crackers.)
- **OILS AND FATS** (Sunflower, safflower, olive, sesame, peanut, flaxseed (edible linseed), canola and soy oils. Use cold-pressed or expeller-pressed oils (available from health food stores), as they are safer for the heart and blood vessels. Do not use corn oil or "vegetable oil" from an unspecified source, as this is usually corn oil. Soy and sunflower or safflower margarine are OK from an allergy standpoint, but we do not consider margarine a desirable food, as there is evidence it may promote heart disease. It is acceptable to use margarine

during the elimination and testing period. However, if you are not allergic to butter, we recommend it instead of margarine, once you have completed food testing. Also suggested are vegetable and bean spreads, instead of butter or margarine.)

- **SNACKS** (Any food can be eaten as a snack, any time of day. Also suggested are celery, carrot sticks or other vegetables. Fruit in moderation (no citrus). Unsalted fresh nuts and seeds. Barbara's Granola Bars from health food stores. Wheat-free cookies. Check ingredients).
- **BEVERAGES** (Non-citrus herb teas, spring water in glass bottles or clear plastic, seltzer (salt free), Perrier, pure fruit juices without sugar or additives (dilute 50:50 with water), almond nut milk (Nut Quick), soymilk without corn oil (such as Eden Soy Plain), Caffix, Inka and Roma may be used as coffee substitutes. **Tap water** contains chlorine, fluoride and other potentially allergenic chemicals. In some cases, distilled or spring water in glass bottles is the only water allowed. This would include water used for cooking. If tap water is eliminated, it should be reintroduced as if it were a test food. Restrictions on the type of water permitted will be made on a case-by-case basis.)
- **THICKENERS** (Rice, oat, millet, barley, soy, kudzu or amaranth flours, arrowroot, agar)
- **SPICES AND CONDIMENTS** (Salt in moderation, pepper, herbal spices (without preservatives, citrus or sugar), garlic, ginger, onions, catsup and mustard from the health food store (without sugar), wheat-free tamari sauce, Bragg's liquid aminos, Vitamin C crystals in water as a substitute for lemon juice.)
- **MISCELLANEOUS** (Sugar-free spaghetti sauce, fruit jams or preserves or jellies without sugar or citrus, soups such as split pea, lentil, turkey vegetable, etc.)

III. GENERAL INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DO NOT RESTRICT YOUR CALORIES!

Start with a good breakfast, eat frequently throughout the day, and consume at least 4 glasses of water per day. If you do not eat enough, you may experience symptoms of low blood sugar, such as fatigue, irritability, headache, and too-rapid weight loss. To ensure adequate fiber, eat beans, permitted whole grains, whole fruits and vegetables, homemade vegetable soup, nuts and seeds. Be sure to chew thoroughly, in order to enhance digestion.

PLAN YOUR MEALS FOR THE WEEK. TAKE A LIST TO THE HEALTH FOOD STORE.

If your schedule is very busy and it is hard to think of what to fix, take some time before starting the diet to make a list of all of your favorite types of foods and possible meal plans. For ideas, look through cookbooks that specialize in hypoallergenic diets. Most meals can be modified easily to meet the requirements of the diet, without changing the meal plan for the rest of your family. When you go to the health food store, ask for assistance in locating "allowed" versions of breads, crackers, cereals, muffins, soups, etc. Some people find it helpful to prepare additional foods on the weekend, to cut down on thinking and preparation time during the week. If you need further assistance or ideas, talk with your diet counselor.

DINING OUT

Do not hesitate to ask questions or make requests. For instance, you could ask for fish topped with slivered almonds, cooked without added seasoning, butter or lemon. Get baked potato with a slice of onion on top. Order steak or lamb chops with fresh vegetables, also prepared without added seasonings (with the exception of garlic & plain herbs). Use salad bars that do not use sulfites as a preservative, and bring your own dressing (oil and cider vinegar with chopped nuts/seeds and fresh herbs). Get into the habit of carrying pure

water, snacks, seasonings, etc., wherever you go, to supplement your meals or to have something on hand if you start to get hungry.

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

About one in four patients develops mild "withdrawal" symptoms within a few days after starting the diet. Withdrawal symptoms may include fatigue, irritability, headaches, malaise, or increased hunger. These symptoms generally disappear within 2-5 days and are usually followed by an improvement in your original symptoms. If withdrawal symptoms are too uncomfortable, take buffered vitamin C (calcium ascorbate - 1,000 mg in tablet form or 1/4 teaspoon of the crystals, up to 4 times a day) or 3/4 teaspoon of "alkali salts" (2 parts potassium bicarbonate, 1 part sodium bicarbonate) in water as needed, up to 3 times a day for several days. In most cases, withdrawal symptoms are not severe and do not require treatment. It is best to discontinue all of the foods abruptly ("cold turkey"), rather than easing into the diet slowly.

IV. TESTING (CHALLENGING) FOODS

It may take 3 weeks for symptoms to improve enough to allow you to retest foods. However, it would be best to test the foods anyway, to rule out hidden offenders. Most patients do improve. Some feel so well on the diet that they decide not to test the foods. This could be a mistake. If you wait too long to retest, your allergies may "settle down" and you will not be able to provoke your symptoms by food testing. Then, you will not know which foods you are allergic to. If reintroducing certain foods causes a recurrence of symptoms, you are probably allergic to those foods.

FOOD SOURCES FOR TESTING

Test pure sources of a food. Example: do not use pizza to test cheese, because pizza also contains wheat and corn oil. Do not use bread to test wheat, as it contains other ingredients. Organic sources are the best to use for testing, as you will not experience interference from pesticides, hormones or other additives that may be used in commercial preparations.

TEST ONE NEW FOOD EACH DAY

If your main symptom is arthritic pain, test one new food every other day. Allergic reactions to test foods usually occur within 10 minutes to 12 hours after ingestion. However, joint pains may be delayed by as much as 48 hours.

EAT A RELATIVELY LARGE AMOUNT OF EACH TEST FOOD

For instance, on the day to test milk, add a large glass at breakfast, along with any of the other foods on the "permitted" list. ***If after one serving, your original symptoms come back, or if you develop a headache, bloating, nausea, dizziness, or fatigue, do not eat that food anymore and place it on your "allergic" list.*** If no symptoms occur, eat the food again for lunch and supper and watch for reactions. Even if the food is well tolerated, do not add it back into your diet until you have finished testing all of the foods. ***If you do experience a reaction, wait until your symptoms have improved before testing the next food.*** If you wake up the next morning with head or joint pain, nausea, or any other suspicious symptom, you may be experiencing a delayed reaction to the food you tested the day before. If you are uncertain whether you have reacted to a particular

food, remove it from your diet and retest it 4-5 days later. You do not have to test foods you never eat. **Do not test foods you already know cause symptoms.**

FOODS MAY BE TESTED IN ANY ORDER

Begin testing on a day you are feeling well (without colds, unusual headaches, flu). Review the list of symptoms to watch for and keep a journal of how you feel.

CHALLENGING INDIVIDUAL FOODS

Dairy: Test milk and cheese on separate days. You may wish to test several cheeses on different days, since some people are allergic to one cheese but not another. It is usually not necessary to test yogurt, cottage cheese, or butter separately.

Wheat: Wheatena (with no milk or sugar) or another pure wheat cereal, May add soy or nut milk.

Corn: Use fresh ears of corn or frozen corn (without sauces or preservatives)

Egg: Test the whites and yolks on separate days, using hard-boiled eggs.

Citrus: Oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and limes. Test these individually on four separate days. The lemon and lime can be squeezed into Perrier or seltzer. In the case of orange and grapefruit, use the whole fruit.

Frequently eaten foods: Test tap water, if you have eliminated it, followed by those foods you have restricted (such as foods being consumed more than three times a week).

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE TESTS (The following foods and beverages are considered undesirable, regardless of whether or not you are allergic to them. If any of them are not now a part of your diet, or if you are fully committed to eliminating them from your diet, there is no need to test them. However, if you have been consuming any of them regularly, it is a good idea to test them and find out how they affect you. Reactions to these foods and beverages may be severe in some cases. They should be tested only on days that you can afford to feel badly.)

- **Coffee and tea (separate days):** Do not add milk, non-dairy creamer or sugar. May add soymilk. If you use decaffeinated coffee, test it separately. Coffee, tea, decaffeinated coffee, and decaffeinated tea are separate tests.
- **Sugar:** Put 4 teaspoons of sugar in a drink or on cereal, or mix with another food.
- **Chocolate:** Use 1-2 tablespoons of pure baker's chocolate or Hershey's cocoa powder in a drink or mix with another food.
- **Alcohol (test this last):** Beer, wine and hard liquor may require testing on different days, as the reaction to each may be different. Have 2 drinks per test day, but only if you can afford not to feel well that day and possibly the next day.
- **Food additives:** Buy a set of McCormick's or French's food dyes and colors. Put 1/2 teaspoon of each color in a glass. Add one teaspoon of the mixture to a glass of water and drink. If you wish, you may test each color separately.

AFTER THE FOOD CHALLENGING/TESTING IS FINISHED, IT'S TIME TO RETURN FOR A FOLLOW-UP VISIT. When you are within 10 days or so of completing your testing, call the office for an appointment. Bring your journal with you, so you may review your experiences with the doctor.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ONGOING SELF-HELP (IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO FOODS)

ROTATION DIETS

If you have an allergic constitution and eat the same foods every day, you may eventually become allergic to them. After you have discovered which foods you can eat safely, make an attempt to rotate your diet. A four-day schedule is necessary for some severely allergic patients, but most people can tolerate foods more frequently than every four days. You may eventually be able to tolerate allergenic foods, after you have avoided them for 6-12 months. However, if you continue to eat these foods more frequently than every fourth day, the allergy may return. Use common sense and consume a wide variety of foods. Do not just latch onto a few favorites. If you are rotating foods, be sure to avoid all forms of the food when you are on and "off" day. For instance, if you are rotating corn, be sure to avoid corn chips, corn oil, corn sweeteners, etc., except on the days that you are eating corn and corn products. It is not necessary to do strict food rotation during the elimination and retesting periods.

WATCH FOR OTHER ALLERGIC REACTIONS

If you have an allergic constitution, you may be allergic to foods other than those you have eliminated and tested on this diet. Pay attention to why you are eating and if you develop symptoms, review your recent meals and try to identify what may be different in what you have eaten. You can then eliminate that food for two weeks and test it again, to see if you can provoke the same symptoms.

SYMPTOMS/CONDITIONS THAT MAY BE DUE TO FOOD ALLERGY

- **General:** Fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia, food cravings, obesity
- **Infection:** Recurrent colds, urinary tract infections, sore throats, ear infections, yeast infections
- **Ear, Nose and Throat:** Chronic nasal congestion, postnasal drip, fluid in the ears, Meniere's syndrome
- **Gastrointestinal:** Irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, gallbladder disease
- **Cardiovascular:** High blood pressure, arrhythmia, angina
- **Dermatologic:** Acne, eczema, psoriasis, canker sores (aphthous ulcers), hives
- **Rheumatologic:** Muscle aches, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Neurologic:** Migraines and other headaches, numbness.
- **Miscellaneous:** Asthma, frequent urination, teeth grinding, bedwetting, infantile colic.

RESOURCES

Pizzorno, J., Murray, M. *A Textbook of Natural Medicine*. Bothell, WA: Bastyr University Publications, 1996.

Crook, William. *Tracking Down your Hidden Food Allergies*.

Rapp, Doris. *Allergies and Your Family*.