

Elimination Diet

An elimination, or challenge, diet is used to discover foods and food additives that may be causing symptoms in those who have sensitivities. Carrying out an elimination diet isn't easy. Here are some of the things you'll need to do to succeed:

1. Before beginning your trial diet, discuss it with your family.
2. Carry out the diet at an appropriate time. Don't try it during a holiday.
3. Before beginning a diet, keep a diary or symptom inventory for at least three days.
4. Continue the symptom diary while you're following the diet.
5. On the initial elimination diet, you can eat the following foods:
 - any vegetable but corn, peas or beans
 - any meat but bacon, sausage, hot dogs or luncheon meat
 - rice, oats, barley and the grain alternatives amaranth, quinoa and buckwheat (available at health food stores)
 - any fruit but citrus (also avoid any fruit you currently eat more than once a week)
 - bottled, spring or distilled water and herb teas.
6. On the initial elimination diet, avoid:
 - milk
 - tea
 - coffee
 - Kool-aid
 - soft drinks
 - eggs
 - bacon
 - sausage
 - hot dogs
 - lunch meat
 - peanuts
 - peas
 - beans
 - corn
 - citrus fruit
 - any fruit you eat more than once a week
 - processed foods
 - sugar
 - wheat
 - chocolate
 - food colors and dyes
7. Continue the diet for 5-10 days, until there is convincing improvement in your symptoms lasting 48 hours.
8. To identify specific food sensitivities, eat one of the eliminated foods per day and note any reactions. Symptoms may occur within a few minutes, a few hours or the next day.

Note: If you have been bothered by asthma, severe hives, swelling or other serious allergic reactions, consult your physician before beginning an elimination diet.

Signs and Symptoms of Food Sensitivity

- fatigue
- nasal congestion
- dark circles under the eyes
- headache
- muscle aches
- irritability
- abdominal pain
- hyperactivity
- attention deficits
- memory loss