

HOW TO DO AN



**ELIMINATION  
DIET**

AND WHY

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE  
FROM SOPHIE ULIANO



With food intolerances and sensitivities becoming more and more common, and with our food sources constantly changing, it's become more important than ever to do an elimination diet at least once in your life - if not once every five years or so.

Elimination diets are the best way to identify food intolerances, sensitivities and allergies through diet. In fact, most doctors start by recommending an elimination diet and food diary when working with patients who display potential food allergies or sensitivities.

# WHAT IS AN ELIMINATION DIET?

An elimination diet systematically removes foods from your diet that you suspect your body doesn't tolerate well. And remember, these are the foods that are potentially "toxic" to you because they will cause an inflammatory response. Once all potential offenders are removed from your diet, they are later reintroduced, one at a time, while you measure potential symptoms that indicate a negative reaction. The goal is to identify foods that your body cannot tolerate, one at a time. The end game is to ultimately create a diet that works in harmony with your body, and your specific genetic makeup. Elimination diets typically last 5-6 weeks, and are great tools for individuals with sensitive guts, food intolerances, or potential allergies.

Elimination diets can also be useful to treat symptoms such as gas, bloating, diarrhea, constipation and nausea. Sometimes, doctors and dieticians suggest elimination diets as a precautionary "first step" to help get patients back to a neutral zone in terms of diet and digestion. I've personally found that eliminating dairy from my diet was a key factor in assuaging some of the digestive issues that I had.

As always, consult a doctor before embarking on an elimination diet, and even better, work with your doctor during the process. This is especially important for people on medication, or with a history of food sensitivities and allergies.

# PHASE 1: ELIMINATION

The first phase of any elimination diet is removing suspected irritants from your diet. You're looking to cut back on foods that you think may be causing symptoms, and also known potential irritants, such as:

- Nuts
- Corn
- Soy
- Dairy
- Highly acidic foods such as coffee and citrus
- Caffeine, soda, black tea
- Nightshade vegetables including tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, white potatoes, cayenne pepper and paprika.
- Fats: Avoid butter, margarine, hydrogenated oils, mayonnaise and spreads.
- Wheat and other grains
- Gluten
- Meat
- Eggs and seafood
- And sugar (white and brown), honey, maple syrup, corn syrup and high-fructose corn syrup, agave nectar, desserts and chocolate.

When choosing which foods to eliminate, take a few moments to tap into your intuition. Oftentimes, we have an inner wisdom (a gut feeling), about which need to go.

For 2-3 weeks, monitor how your body feels before, during and after each meal. Measure if symptoms are recurring, and are related to food or something else. If your symptoms are ongoing after removing potential symptom-inducing foods for 2-3 weeks, it is best to notify your doctor.

# PHASE 2: REINTRODUCTION

During Phase 2, you will slowly reintroduce eliminated foods back into your diet. Each food group should be introduced individually and gradually, over the course of 2-3 days.

It's very important that you monitor and track symptoms as you introduce potentially irritating foods back into your diet. Symptoms to look out for include:

- Rashes and skin changes
- Joint pain
- Headaches or migraines
- Fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in breathing
- Bloating
- Stomach pain or cramps
- Changes in bowel habits

As you reintroduce foods into your diet, if you experience no symptoms, you can assume that it is fine to eat and move on to the next food group.

However, if you experience negative symptoms like those mentioned above, then you have successfully identified a trigger food and should remove it from your diet.

## Foods you should eat on an elimination diet:

- Fruits: Most fruits, excluding citrus fruits.
- Vegetables: Most vegetables, excluding nightshades.
- Grains: Including rice and buckwheat.
- Dairy substitutes: Including coconut milk and unsweetened rice milk.
- Fats: Including cold-pressed olive oil, flaxseed oil and coconut oil.
- Beverages: Water and herbal teas.
- Spices, condiments and others: Including black pepper, fresh herbs and spices (excluding cayenne pepper and paprika) and apple cider vinegar.

# FINALLY, 2 IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT ELIMINATION DIETS:

- It's always recommended that you keep a food journal while going through an elimination diet. Tracking what you eat, and how you feel afterwards will help you spot patterns and trends, and will help you work with your doctor through the diet. Be religious about writing everything down. I recommend having a special notebook for the job! When you walk into your doctor or allergists office with all this information, they will be so better able to help you.
- Elimination diets are not without risk. Which is why we'll say again: Always consult your doctor before embarking on an elimination diet. Elimination diets are not long-term solutions, and should be created and executed with a medical professional.



# BECAUSE I KNEW YOU'D ASK!!!

What about home testing kits? They are becoming increasingly popular, and I don't see any harm in doing one. I recommend the EverlyWell Food Sensitivity At-Home Testing Kits. This at-home test measures your body's immune response to 96 foods to help provide guidance on what foods may be the best to choose for an elimination diet. [Click here to learn more!](#) You can do this in tandem with your elimination diet and food diary.



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