



Allergy Elimination - Challenge Diet

Know that there are two types of allergy that affect the human body.

1. **Immediate reaction** mediated by a protein in the immune system called IGE. This protein typically provokes a response within minutes to hours of exposure.
2. **Delayed reaction** mediated by the protein in the immune system called IGG, which typically provokes a response within 2-4 days. Note that if a person is only consuming a given food 2-3 times per week there can be a smoldering reaction going on continuously causing a perpetuation of symptoms even though the food is not ingested daily.

Typically the IGE response is tested by the skin prick and a blood test. Typically the symptoms are hives, migraines, indigestion, a runny nose, and sneezing.

In contrast IGG is not tested by the skin prick and because of this, you might be allergic to something even when your skin tests are negative. This is called a "false negative". Symptoms of the IGG type typically include eczema, migraine, sinusitis, arthritis, colitis, fatigue, and sometimes fibromyalgia. Some of these symptoms are "deeper" in the system and therefore may take longer to clear.

The immediate type reactions are usually fairly easy to identify because your symptoms are within minutes to hours of ingesting the food. Usually that is before the next meal. And normally the symptoms are fairly short-lived. This means that they settle down fairly soon and are gone until your next exposure. So the symptoms of an Immediate food reaction are usually episodic. By monitoring your symptoms and your diet, usually you will have no trouble figuring things out.

The best way to identify IGG reactions is by **the Elimination Challenge Diet.**

The Elimination Challenge Diet involves eliminating a given food type for a period of days and then re-introducing the same food to observe the response. You will work your way through the food groups listed below, and when you reach the food causing the problem, you will notice some indications that this food is the culprit.

Initially, you may begin to notice significant cravings for the food just eliminated as your system begins to get rid of that food. This craving period may last 2-4 days, and represents a big red flag that you are on the right track. Then usually, over the next 4-5 days, the symptoms that have been bothering you will begin to subside, until by day 10 usually you will feel significantly better. Then when the food is re-introduced, the symptoms will recur after 2-4 days of starting to eat that food once again.

You must keep a daily diary to track the symptoms in order to monitor what food produces what effect.

Elimination Challenge Diet

Eliminate the following food groups, 1 group at a time, in the order indicated.
Eliminate the food group for _____ days, and then re-introduce the food in heavy amounts for _____ days.

Remember to keep a diary of the symptoms observed, since this process may stretch out over several weeks, and you won't begin to remember the reactions for each food.

Eliminate these foods in the order indicated:

- _____ Glutens – This includes all the wheat/flour foods, whether they are considered to be healthy or refined. This is a very large group and includes bread, muffins, cookies, cake, bagels, croissants, English muffins, pasta, noodles, wheat cereals, flour tortillas, pizza crust etc.
Also foods made from oats, rye and barley. Quinoa, spelt and kamut.
- _____ Dairy foods – These include milk, ice cream, sour cream, half and half, full cream, cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese of all types.
- _____ Yeast – This includes breads, cheese, mushrooms, condiments (anything with a vinegar base such as salad dressing, ketchup, mustard) pickles of all sorts, and all alcohol.
- _____ Corn – This includes corn niblets, pop-corn, corn chips, corn cereals, and corn syrup (the most common sweetener in our foods)
- _____ Nuts – peanuts, almonds, filberts, brazils, cashews, sunflower, sesame (remember peanuts are the most allergenic. Also note most nuts belong to different food groups so these can be removed as a group, but in challenging, re-introduce them separately to identify the culprit.
- _____ Soy / peanuts – This includes soybeans, soymilk, tempeh, tofu, and soy tabs.
- _____ Eggs
- _____ Citrus
- _____ Nightshades – This group includes potato, tomato, any peppers, egg-plant, tobacco (especially if chewing).

And any other food that you are regularly ingesting 2-3 times per week or more could be causing problems.

Points to remember:

1. Some food groups, such as dairy, have the basic food that has been altered by certain processes such as bacterial or yeast fermentation. This fermentation process may predigest the particular proteins such that your system is no longer allergic. (Eg. cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt are predigested by bacterial fermentation such that the protein structure is altered such that you might be able to tolerate these foods rather than straight liquid milk, which has not been fermented. In the re-introduction phase one may bring all of these foods back in together or bring them back in separately to identify within the group those food that might be tolerable versus the foods that might not be.
2. Also remember that certain foods have certain added ingredients that complicate the foods that you are being exposed to. For example bread has certain other ingredients such as yeast, dies, preservatives, that one might be reacting to rather than the flour alone. Or in the case of dairy, it might be the bacteria or yeast required for the fermentation process that you reacting to rather than the straight milk. Again, in this situation one can either add all members of the family back (in the case of bread adding pasta noodles, cereals, etc.) or one can add them in separately.

Monitor symptoms during the elimination and challenge process by keeping a diary.

Symptoms to monitor:

Once the food is identified, then of course the relief of symptoms depends on removing this food from your diet. Often in the case of delayed food reactions (IGG reactions) if one removes them from the diet for 6 months or longer, often times the immune system is quieted and these food can be eaten in limited amounts again beyond that time.

If you have concerns about nutritional deficiency that may be caused by eliminating a certain food because of an identified allergy (example – removing dairy and the concern for calcium) then come back to the office with your diary and we will discuss them.

This is a very laborious process; however, it is by far the most accurate way of diagnosing these types of allergies.