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Elimination Diet for Food Allergies and Sensitivities

Since many allergies and sensitivities cannot be clearly identified using blood or skin tests, one of the least invasive ways to help identify the foods which may be causing physical and or behavioral symptoms is by using the Elimination Diet.

The Elimination Diet is comprised of an *Elimination period* and a *Challenge period*. During the Elimination period, a list of foods known to cause reactions is eliminated completely from the diet for two to four weeks. During this time, the diet is based on foods that are generally non-reactive, so that the body can rid itself of food allergens, allowing symptoms to clear.

During the Challenge period, the eliminated foods are added back, systematically, one challenge food every 3 days, and reactions to foods are recorded in a diet log. The diet is still comprised of foods eaten during the elimination period until the challenge period is completed. Once completed, remember to schedule an appointment to discuss the results recorded in the diet log before resuming a normal diet.

Summary:

1. Follow Elimination Diet (non-allergenic food list) for 2-4 weeks
2. Check with Dr. Berger to ensure that all symptoms have cleared and that it is safe to move on to Challenge phase of diet
3. Follow guidelines for challenging foods, one food at a time for 3 days in a row, keeping a detailed record of reactions
4. If symptoms do occur, stop challenge immediately, record reaction, and do not begin again until 24 symptom-free hours have passed.
5. Schedule to discuss results

Foods To Eat During the Elimination Period

- **Grains:** Brown rice, White rice, Quinoa, Millet, Buckwheat (this is not the same as wheat), Tapioca, Amaranth, Teff
- **Fruit:** All fruits are allowed except Citrus, Red Grapes, Canned fruits
- **Vegetables:** All are allowed except corn, tomatoes, eggplant, okra, bell and chili peppers (the “nightshade vegetables”)
- **Meats:** Poultry, Beef, Lamb, Pork
- **Beans & Legumes:** All allowed except soy and peanuts

- Nuts/Seeds: All fresh nuts and seeds allowed
- Oils/Fats: All allowed except peanut oil, soybean oil, corn oil
- Sweeteners: Unprocessed honey, maple syrup and brown rice syrup—no more than 2 tbsp per day
- Spices: all allowed (be aware of additives)
- Condiments: apple cider vinegar, rice vinegar, sea salt, black pepper, fresh crushed garlic, olive oil (some mustard and other prepared condiments may be allowed—Check ingredients to verify)
- Beverages: Filtered water, Club soda, Plain rice milk (not Rice Dream, this has gluten), Diluted fruit juices (no citrus or grape), non-caffeinated herbal teas

Foods to Eliminate:

- Dairy: All dairy products, including all mammals milks, cheeses, yogurt, ice cream and any other food containing whey or casein (milk protein)
- Grains/Legumes: All gluten-containing grains: wheat, barley, rye, oats, kamut and spelt, and corn and soy
- Nightshade Vegetables: Tomatoes, Potatoes, Eggplant, Okra, Bell peppers, Chili Peppers
- All corn products (including corn starch and corn syrup)
- Modified food starch (this is usually corn or wheat)
- Eggs
- Citrus Fruits and Red Grapes: Orange, Grapefruit, Lemon, Lime, Tangerine, etc.
- Oils: Peanut, Corn and Soy oils (vegetable oil most often contains soy)
- Refined Sweeteners: White sugar, Brown sugar, Turbinado sugar, Lactose, Maltose, Corn Syrup
- Condiments: some include: Seasoned salt, Ketchup, Tamari, Soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, BBQ sauce, Steak sauce, most Mustards
(Be aware of soy, tomato, white vinegar and corn syrup in condiments)
- Sulfites: some dried fruits, packaged shellfish, balsamic vinegar, modified food starch, horseradish, pickles, frozen fruit juices, olives, fresh shrimp, shredded coconut, canned foods
- Food Additives: artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners, preservatives, texturizing agents
- Caffeinated Foods: cocoa, chocolate, coffee, black tea
- Alcohol: beer, wine, liquor, extracts, some medicines

How to Challenge Foods:

Below is a list of challenge foods and quantities to be consumed and preparation suggestions. Foods should be consumed 3 times on day 1 and days 2 and 3 are strictly for observation (do not consume challenge foods on day 2 or 3). Remember to record any reactions in a diet log. If a reaction does occur, stop consuming the challenge food; a new food can be introduced only after

24 hours have passed, symptom free. Should any extreme reactions occur, please contact Dr. Berger immediately.

Dairy

Milk: Use 1 cup of cow's milk

Suggestions: Drink straight, pour on elimination diet friendly cereal.

Cheese: Use 1-2 oz hard cheese

Suggestions: Eat alone, Eat with elimination diet friendly toast

Egg White: Use 1-2 egg whites (separate from yolk)

Suggestions: Scrambled or Fried, Hard boil and separate

Egg Yolk: Use 1-2 yolks (separate from white)

Suggestions: Scrambled or Fried, Hard boil and separate

Grains/Legumes

Gluten: Use non-wheat gluten source

Suggestions: 1 cup cooked oatmeal, 1 cup cooked barley, 100% rye bread

Wheat: Use 100% whole wheat

Suggestions: Shredded wheat with rice milk, 1 cup pure wheat pasta

Corn: Use 100% corn

Suggestions: 1 cup corn grits, 1 cup frozen corn

Soy: Use 1 cup soy or soy-based food

Suggestions: 1 cup soymilk, 1 cup edamame

Vegetables

Nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, bell peppers, okra): Use 1 cup raw, sautéed, or fried

Suggestions: 1 cup tomato juice, 1 cup sautéed potatoes

Fruits

Citrus (lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit): Use 1 whole fruit or juice of one fruit squeezed into water

Red Grapes: Use ½-1 cup organic red grapes

Other Foods/Beverages

Sugar: Use 4 tsp white sugar

Suggestions: On cereal, fruit or in drink

Chocolate: Use 1-2 tbsp baker's chocolate or cocoa powder

Suggestions: Make hot cocoa with water or rice milk, sprinkle into hot elimination diet friendly cereal

Caffeine: drink 1/2 cup of green tea

Sulfites: Use 2 dried apricots, preserved with sulfites

Tips for a Successful Elimination Diet

- Focus on Whole Foods; it makes shopping and food preparation much easier while on the diet.
- Snack as much as you desire and eat well-balanced meals to reduce irritability.
- Read your labels carefully! If unsure about an ingredient, always check before eating.
- Plan your meals ahead of time to reduce the stress of cooking on this diet.
- Some patients will go through a withdrawal period as the foods are eliminated, and there can be unusual or negative symptoms during this time period. Buffered C and Epsom salt baths often can decrease these symptoms. Please call our office if anything negative is seen when the diet is started, so we can provide proper dosing for these supplements.