

Nutrition Series

Elimination Diet

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FOOD SENSITIVITY ELIMINATION DIET

Doing an elimination diet is a good way to pinpoint whether you are reacting to foods in a particular food group. While it takes about a month to follow the steps suggested below, you'd have determined what foods may be responsible for your symptoms. Once you've eliminated these from your diet you may be able to maintain your symptom-free status forever.

1. Begin by making a real effort to eliminate all of the following foods from your diet for at least seven and preferably 10 days.

- Dairy products, including cheese
- Egg and egg-containing products
- Gluten-containing products, such as wheat and wheat-containing products (including pasta), and barley, oat or rye grains
- Corn and corn-containing products
- Citrus fruits

Some quick substitution ideas for this period might include:

- For dairy: Use soy milk and soy cheese; rice milk, rice-based ice cream.
- For gluten or corn: Try rice, buckwheat, spelt, millet, potatoes or sweet potatoes.

2. After seven days, reconsider your symptoms. If they are completely unchanged, there is probably no food sensitivity component to your problem. Most people with food sensitivities, however, feel nonspecifically "better" after undertaking this program. This may mean not only the elimination of your predominant symptom, but also improved energy, better mental clarity, reduction of joint or muscle aches and improved digestion, including less gas and bloating.

3. The next step is to return one food group to your diet every three days. Be sure to keep a symptom diary. In it you can not only track your primary symptom but also record anything else you notice.

4. At the end of your three-week "return" period, you should have a good idea of the dietary culprit (or culprits).

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HinterlandChiropractic

7 Price Street, Nerang Qld 4211

Phone: +61 7 5527 3133

www.goldcoastchiropractor.com

