

## **Elimination Diet:**

Changing the way you eat often helps you feel better, have more energy, shed some weight, sleep better and get rid of some bothersome digestive symptoms. Elimination diets often help chronic health conditions such as IBS, eczema, chronic allergies, headaches, arthritis, hormone problems, reflux, bloating, gas, constipation, anxiety, joint pain, insomnia, autoimmune diseases.

But where do you start? What's the best diet for YOU? Too many choices! The best way to start for most women is the ***Elimination Diet. Handouts: IFM Elimination Diet, 28 Day Gut Reset***

Elimination diets are not magic, it's just REMOVING foods that make you sick and ADD foods that make you healthy!

The Elimination Diet is THE GOLD STANDARD for identifying food sensitivities. It is a great tool you can use to identify the foods you eat that might be triggering symptoms or health problems. It isn't expensive, doesn't require fancy supplements, books, or videos. Its success is based on the fact that by eliminating foods that trigger inflammation in your body, you can get rid of many symptoms and diseases that have inflammation as their root cause.

The elimination diet has 4 phases. Best results occur when you do it for 4-6 weeks. If you think you can only do it for 3 wks, try that. It won't work if you "cheat", so if you aren't ready to do it, take time to plan and do it right so you get the benefit. A common response to discussing elimination diet: "why are you taking my favorite foods from me?" Since this is about your health and you feeling better, make this an experiment to find out how you can feel your best!

### **PHASES:**

#### ***Phase 1: Planning***

- Make a plan. Take 3-7 days to plan and prep your kitchen:
  - Clean out your cabinets and fridge of foods and ingredients that contain sugar in all forms including high-fructose corn syrup, sugar substitutes and artificial sweeteners, artificial ingredients (if you can't pronounce it, it's probably not natural), trans-fats, coffee, alcohol, and processed "junk" foods.
  - Start to cut back on all of the above. If you are a regular coffee drinker, switch to green tea the week before the elimination diet to make your transition easier.

- Fill your pantry and fridge with the foods and ingredients you'll need for the first week of your elimination diet.
- If you are new to cooking and eating Whole Foods, there are websites with healthy recipes. (Just ask!)
- Plan to start your elimination diet on a weekend so you have a couple of days at home to get used to the changes AND plan ahead with meals and cooking prep so you have leftovers for lunches and future dinners.
- Write down 8-10 things to do if you are craving food that are off-limits. Examples include: phone a friend who is a support person while you're doing the elimination diet, write in your journal, take a walk, listen to music, brush your teeth, having healthy food substitutes for snacks when your resistance is low.

#### ***Phase 2: Start the Elimination Diet AND Boot Out ALL food triggers.*** Options:

- BASIC elimination diet plus anything else you think causes symptoms
- If you can't do the BASIC diet - start with gluten, dairy, processed food, alcohol and sugar. If this isn't enough for you to feel better, you may get discouraged and stop or if you switch to the BASIC elimination diet at that point, the whole process is longer.
- Start with the BASIC diet, if you aren't seeing improvement in symptoms in 2 weeks then switch to the MODERATE or ADVANCED diet (check in with us at this point to get help deciding next best step so you aren't wasting time)
- Start with the ADVANCED diet x 2wks then introduce what is allowed on the MODERATE diet for 2wks (add one thing back every 1-2 days) then add back what is allowed on the BASIC diet x 2wks (add one thing back every 1-2 days) so at the end, you are only on the BASIC diet.
- ***Basic Elimination Diet:*** remove gluten (+gluten containing grains - barley, bulgar, rye, wheat), dairy, sugar, alcohol, processed food, caffeine
- ***Moderate Elimination Diet:*** Gluten/grains + gluten cross-reactives (coffee, chocolate, corn, oats, millet, amaranth), Dairy, Sugar (includes excessive fruit intake), Alcohol, processed foods, coffee/caffeine containing foods, Yeasted foods, Grains +/- legumes
- ***Advanced Elimination Diet*** (tried other elimination diets and/or have autoimmune d/o, joint pain:
  - Gluten and gluten cross-reactives
  - Dairy (cheese, yogurt, milk, butter, ice cream)
  - Sugar
  - Alcohol

- Processed foods including processed meats
- Coffee/caffeine containing foods
- Yeasted foods
- All fruit
- All grain products (except cooked brown rice or quinoa)
- Nightshade vegetables (tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, and potatoes)
- Nuts
- Legumes
- Foods that you tend to crave (these are often sneaky culprits of inflammation!)
- Foods you already know cause symptoms
- Careful with foods that you eat most days – your body can start to see these as inflammatory triggers if your gut isn't healthy!

### **There's a LOT you CAN eat in the Basic/Moderate Elimination Diets:**

- Meat: chicken, turkey, lamb, cold water fish like salmon or sardines
- Almond milk, nut butters except peanut butter
- Nuts and seeds: except peanuts, 1-2svg/d
- Vegetables: all except nightshades - eat a wide variety, eat the rainbow, 5-10 serving/d
- Soups: clear broth based
- Fats/oils: olive oil, walnut oil, coconut oil, avocado, sesame oil, ghee (clarified butter)
- Gluten free whole grains: brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat, millet, oats (careful of cross contamination)
- Legumes: lentils, beans, 1svg/d
- Fruits: 1-3 servings/d, focus on low glycemic fruit such as berries
- Spices: all spices, including garlic and onions, many improve digestion and metabolism; avoid those that trigger reflux if this is a problem
- Beverages: water, carbonated water, water with lemon, green tea, herbal tea
- Dairy alternatives
- Sea salt to taste

Goal: 1-2 bowl movements daily. Plenty of fiber (>30 gm) from fresh vegetables and water (60-80oz/d). Supplements such as flax seed, psyllium and magnesium citrate up to 800 mg/nightly are safe.

### **Phase 3: The Reintroduction**

After the elimination phase, plan to reintroduce foods. Start by reintroducing a small portion of a food from a particular food group (i.e. dairy, gluten...) at breakfast. If no reactions then larger portion with lunch or dinner. Keep the food in your diet for 2 days. If no symptoms, it is unlikely to be a problem for you and add the next food group. If it does cause symptoms, take it out of your diet (for 3-6 mo) and write that food down. Then start the next

reintroduction after your symptoms are better, usually 1-2 days later.

### **Phase 4: After the Elimination Diet**

Now what? Simple: If you have clear benefit, simply keep the offending foods out of your diet, BUT make sure that you are getting your nutrition from foods you can eat. *It is helpful to have an appointment at this point to make sure you are getting to eat as much as possible and get the nutrition you need.*

Some women stay on the restricted elimination diet for longer, this isn't sustainable and eventually you will probably feel worse because you aren't getting enough nutrition!

Once your gut is healed (a common culprit in food intolerances) you are often able to introduce more foods.

**Life Long Goal: real food only, balance blood sugar, reclaim a healthy relationship with food, stay nourished/feel better**

### **Basic Diet:**

Breakfast: 4-6 oz high quality protein, 1 T fat or avocado, 1-3 veggies or 1 fruit

Lunch: 4-6 oz of high quality protein, 1 T fat or avocado, 2-3 veggies, 1 starch - either complex carb or high energy veggie (white potato, winter squash)

Dinner: 4-6 oz protein, 1 T fat, 2-4 veggies, 1-2 complex carbs or high energy veggie

### **Additional Considerations:**

1. Eliminate for 28 days
2. MSQ at beginning and end of the 28 days
3. KEEP a food journal. Record observations about your responses to food - focus on being curious not restriction. Ex: carbs give you brain fog.
4. Why are you doing this - you want to feel better, remember this is not permanent
5. Set a clear start date and start on that day!
6. Have accountability
7. Have a trouble shooting plan (8-10 things to do) when you have cravings or you are going out...
8. One of the most important parts: Prep your kitchen - clean out the pantry, shopping list - go shopping, look up recipes
9. Schedule an appointment (can be telemedicine with ZOOM) at the end of your elimination phase BEFORE you start adding back.
10. If you have any questions or concerns then send a message through the portal.