

**Anti-Inflammatory Elimination-Rechallenge Diet**

The purpose of an Elimination-Rechallenge diet is to identify any hidden food sensitivities or intolerances that may be causing symptoms in the body. This is done in two phases-- the first is an elimination phase where foods that are known to cause inflammation (an increase in pain, swelling, and/or dysfunction in affected tissues/organs) are taken out of the diet. The elimination phase takes 3-4 weeks to complete. The second phase is a rechallenge phase where the foods eliminated in phase I are reintroduced, one at a time, to see if any cause symptoms. The length of the rechallenge phase depends on how many foods you want to challenge.

It is important to follow this diet strictly in order to accurately identify any food sensitivities you may have. If done correctly, an Elimination-Rechallenge diet is the gold standard for identifying food sensitivities.

**Phase I: Elimination Phase / Anti-Inflammatory Diet**

The elimination phase involves following an anti-inflammatory diet. Eliminating foods that tend to cause inflammation in the body and replacing them with the healthiest possible foods – organic whenever possible, non-processed, pastured, and free-range – will facilitate detoxification and optimize function, as well as minimize or eliminate symptoms that may be due to food. Inflammation is known to be involved in multiple conditions – chronic pain, arthritis, weight gain, diabetes, migraines, autoimmune diseases, asthma, osteoporosis, and even Alzheimer’s disease and depression. An anti-inflammatory diet is a low-risk approach that enables you to take charge of your health.

**The Basics of the Anti-inflammatory Diet -- to be followed strictly for 3-4 weeks:**

<b>Foods to Avoid</b>	<b>Foods to Eat</b>
<p><u>Protein to avoid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soy and all soy products (tofu, soy milk, tempeh, etc.)</li> <li>● Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt). Pastured butter and ghee are acceptable.</li> <li>● Eggs</li> <li>● Peanuts/peanut butter</li> <li>● Beef, pork, processed meats (including bacon, lunch meat, hot dogs, meat substitutes made from soy)</li> <li>● Shellfish</li> </ul>	<p><u>Protein to eat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fish (good choices include salmon, sardines, tilapia -- see <a href="http://www.seafoodwatch.org">www.seafoodwatch.org</a> for other low mercury choices)</li> <li>● Moderate amounts (one 3 oz. serving a day, or about the size of the palm of your hand) of free-range chicken/turkey/duck, lamb, and game meat.</li> <li>● Vegetarians: legumes – lentils, split peas, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, black and kidney beans. Soak overnight and cook slowly the following day.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Fats to avoid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hydrogenated oils</li> <li>● Vegetable oils high in omega-6 fats: corn oil, soy oil, canola oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, peanut oil, sesame oil, wheatgerm oil, cottonseed oil</li> <li>● Butter/ghee that is not grassfed</li> <li>● Any oil/fat not listed in “Fat to eat”</li> </ul>	<p><u>Fats to eat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nuts and seeds (except no peanuts). If eating a lot of nuts, they can be made more digestible by soaking in salt water overnight and baking over very low heat.</li> <li>● Nut/seed butter</li> <li>● Avocado / avocado oil</li> <li>● Extra virgin olive oil</li> <li>● Coconut oil</li> </ul>
<p><u>Carbohydrates to avoid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All gluten-containing grains – wheat, rye, barley, kamut, spelt, oats, corn.</li> <li>● If you have joint pain, also avoid nightshades: tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, peppers (including spices like cayenne pepper and chili pepper).</li> </ul>	<p><u>Carbohydrates to eat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lots of fresh vegetables of all kinds (except nightshades if you have joint pain). Organic is preferred.</li> <li>● Fruits, preferably low glycemic index fruits such as berries, stone fruits, orchard fruits. Eat fruits preferably away from other foods. Organic is preferred.</li> <li>● Starchy root vegetables -- sweet potato, yam, taro, squash, potatoes (if no joint pain).</li> <li>● Limited amounts of non-gluten-containing grains – rice, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, teff, tapioca.</li> <li>● Limited amounts of legumes (unless vegetarian) – lentils, split peas, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, black and kidney beans. Soak overnight and cook slowly the following day.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Liquids/fluids to avoid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alcohol</li> <li>● Coffee</li> <li>● Sodas</li> </ul>	<p><u>Liquids/fluids to drink</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plenty of filtered water (half your body weight in fluid ounces daily)</li> <li>● Mineral water</li> <li>● Herbal teas</li> <li>● White/green tea</li> <li>● Vegetable juices (with no sodium added)</li> <li>● Very small quantities (1/4 cup per day) of organic, unsweetened fruit juice – to take diluted in sparkling water or in smoothies</li> </ul>

Other foods to avoid

- Sugar and all sweeteners (including honey, maple syrup, brown rice syrup, etc.) and sugar substitutes (e.g. aspartame/ NutraSweet, saccharine, etc.)
- Processed junk foods
- Fried foods
- All foods with additives such as food dyes, preservatives, flavor enhancers, nitrates, etc.
- Any known food allergy, sensitivity, or intolerance

**Phase II: Rechallenge / Food reintroduction**

The purpose of the rechallenge phase is to identify any foods that may be causing symptoms. A comprehensive food rechallenge involves challenging each type of food that was eliminated in phase I. Depending on your symptoms and food habits, you and your healthcare provider may choose to only challenge a certain group of foods. We recommend that you come in for a follow-up appointment after the elimination phase to get specific details about reintroducing foods for your individual case. Additionally, if your symptoms have not improved after 3 weeks during the elimination phase, you may be asked to continue the elimination or to modify it with different foods.

When you reintroduce (or rechallenge) foods, you will typically “react” to a food in your area of susceptibility – you may get migraine symptoms if you suffer from migraines, or abdominal cramping, gas, and bloating if you suffer from IBS, or increased pain if you have fibromyalgia. The aggravation may be more subtle – mood swings, increased phlegm, or nasal congestion. Keeping a food/symptom diary as you go through the rechallenge phase can be very helpful in keeping track of symptoms that come up with each food that is reintroduced.

**Instructions for rechallenging foods:**

1. After strictly following the elimination diet for at least 3 weeks, choose a food to challenge and consume it in its whole form. For example, to introduce corn, eat fresh or frozen corn.
2. Eat 3 servings of the food in one day -- breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If you develop symptoms at any time, stop eating the food. For example, if you develop symptoms after eating one serving for breakfast, do not eat the food for lunch or dinner.
3. If you do not have any symptoms on day 1 of reintroducing the food, wait for an additional 2 more days to see if you have a delayed reaction, which is not uncommon.
4. If after three days (day 1 of food introduction + 2 days of waiting) you have no noticeable reactions, that food you just challenged can be added back to your diet. You can then challenge another food.

5. If you react to the food on day 1 when reintroducing it, you don't have to wait the 2 additional days as you have identified that particular food as inflammatory for you. However, you should wait until any symptoms that have appeared resolve, then try challenging another food the following day after symptoms have cleared.
6. Once you have a known reaction to a food, eliminate that food from the diet for 3-6 months. At the end of that time, you can try re-introducing the food to see if you have better tolerance.

Follow-up with your healthcare provider after you finish the food rechallenge phase to discuss a plan for going forward. If there are a lot of foods you reacted to, you may need to do a gut healing protocol so that you can tolerate more foods in the future. If you are chronically ill, have an autoimmune disease, have low immunity, or are under chronic stress, you may never want to add back gluten-containing grains. Some foods are individually allergenic and other foods are generally inflammatory, such as wheat.

### **Resources for additional information**

***The Anti-Inflammation Diet and Recipe Book*** by Jessica Black, ND. Goes into depth regarding why certain foods are inflammatory and gives great recipes and menu plans. However, Dr. Black includes soy and some gluten-containing grains in her diet plan which we do not as they may be inflammatory for some people.

***The Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook*** by Alissa Segersten, Tom Malterre, MS, CN. A cookbook that is generally an anti-inflammatory diet cookbook and has a lot of tips on how to modify recipes to accommodate food sensitivities.

***The Practical Paleo*** by Diane Sanfilippo. 30-day meals plans and over 120 easy recipes.

***The Whole 30*** -- <https://whole30.com/>. A similar anti-inflammatory diet, but includes eggs which we do not recommend as they are a common food allergen. Check out the website for meal planning help, approved products, and more resources.