

How to Follow a Food Elimination Diet

Patient Name: _____

Dietitian: _____

Contact Information: _____

WHAT IS A FOOD ELIMINATION DIET?

A food elimination diet helps identify whether certain foods are causing your symptoms. It involves removing specific foods from your diet (usually for six weeks) and then reintroducing them one at a time to find out which ones are the problem. ^[1,4]

The most common food allergens are:

- Cow's milk protein
- Egg
- Fish and shellfish
- Soy
- Peanuts and tree nuts
- Wheat

If symptoms return when a food is reintroduced, speak with your dietitian, as that food is likely one you are sensitive to. ^[2]

WHY DO I NEED THIS DIET?

There are several reasons your doctor may have recommended a food elimination diet. One common reason is Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE), a condition where the immune system reacts to certain foods by causing ongoing inflammation in the oesophagus (the tube from your mouth to your stomach). The body produces too many eosinophils (a type of white blood cell), which causes swelling when certain foods are eaten. ^[1]

An elimination diet can identify which foods are causing this reaction. Research shows that many children with EoE see significant symptom improvement after completing an elimination diet. ^[1,4]

ALLERGY TESTING

Have you had allergy testing done? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what kind of testing? _____

What were the results? _____

FOODS TO ELIMINATE

Tick or mark each food group below that your dietitian has asked you to remove. Avoid all foods and ingredients listed for each ticked group. ^[2,3]

FOOD GROUP	COMMON FOODS AND INGREDIENTS TO AVOID
☐ Cow's Milk	Foods: Butter, cheese, cream, cow's milk, goat's milk, ice cream, pudding, sour cream, whey, yogurt Ingredients: Casein, diacetyl, lactalbumin, lactoferrin, lactose, lactulose, recaldent, rennet casein, tagatose, whey

FOOD GROUP	COMMON FOODS AND INGREDIENTS TO AVOID
☐ Eggs	Foods: Eggs (any form), eggnog, lecithin, mayonnaise, meringue, egg substitutes Ingredients: Albumin, globulin, lysozyme, ovalbumin, ovovitellin
☐ Fish and Shellfish	Foods: All fish, crab, lobster, mussels, scallops, shrimp Ingredients: Fish sauce, fish stock, seafood flavouring, imitation seafood
☐ Soy	Foods: Edamame, miso, natto, soy sauce, store-bought broths, tempeh, teriyaki sauce, tofu Ingredients: Soybean, textured vegetable protein, vegetable gums and starches
☐ Peanuts and Tree Nuts	Foods: All nuts, nut milks, nut-based spreads Ingredients: Nut extract, nut flour, nut oil, nut paste
☐ Wheat	Foods: Breads, couscous, crackers, flour, pasta, pizza crust Ingredients: Bulgur, durum, einkorn, emmer, farina, kamut, matzoh, semolina, spelt, triticale
☐ Other (as directed)	

HOW LONG DO I FOLLOW THE DIET?

You will need to avoid the marked foods for _____ weeks. Once this time is up, your dietitian will guide you through reintroducing foods one at a time.

DO I NEED SUPPLEMENTS?

Removing major food groups may affect your nutrient intake. Ask your dietitian whether you need supplements such as calcium or vitamin D during this time.^[2]

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Focus on whole, unprocessed foods and cook from scratch where possible.
- Cook in large batches and freeze portions to save time during the week.
- Coconut oil is a good substitute for butter when both milk and soy must be avoided.
- Use calcium-fortified rice milk in place of regular milk, soy milk, or almond milk.

EGG SUBSTITUTES FOR BAKING

SUBSTITUTE	HOW TO USE IT	BEST FOR	NOTES
Baking soda + vinegar	5 ml baking soda + 5 ml vinegar = 1 egg	Cookies, white cakes, loaves	Best for recipes needing only 1 egg
Ground flaxseed + water	Mix 1/3 cup ground flax in 1 cup water. Boil, simmer 3 min. Refrigerate. 1 tbsp = 1 egg	Pancakes, muffins, cookies	Products will be moist. May not work if recipe needs 2-3 eggs
Mashed banana	1/2 medium banana = 1 egg	Cakes, muffins	Adds banana flavour; products may be slightly gummy
Vinegar	15 ml = 1 egg	Baked goods	Goes stale quickly (use within 4 days or freeze)

SUGGESTED MEAL IDEAS

Breakfast

- BLT sandwich on gluten-free bread
- Fruit smoothie with gluten-free toast
- Gluten-free cereal with rice milk
- Gluten-free pancakes with syrup and fresh fruit
- Oatmeal with berries

Lunch

- Caesar salad with chicken (dairy-free dressing)
- Rice pasta salad
- Sandwich on gluten-free bread
- Rice crackers with vegetables and hummus

Dinner

- Meat, potato, and vegetables
- Stir-fry with rice
- Stews, soups, or chilli
- Tacos in a corn shell
- Gluten-free spaghetti and meatballs

RECOMMENDED COOKBOOKS

The Whole Foods Allergy Cookbook - Cybele Pascal (dairy, egg, wheat, soy, nut, fish, shellfish free)

Allergy Free Cookbook - Alice Sherwood (egg, dairy, nut, gluten free)

The Allergen-Free Baker's Handbook - Cybele Pascal (gluten, wheat, dairy, egg, soy, nut free)

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- **ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy):** www.allergy.org.au - Patient resources on food allergy and elimination diets
- **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia:** 1300 728 000 | www.allergyfacts.org.au - Support, information, and resources for people with food allergies
- **Dietitians Australia:** www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au - Find an accredited practising dietitian
- **The Sydney Children's Hospital Network - Eosinophilic Disorders:** www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au

REFERENCES

1. Lucendo AJ, et al. (2017). Guidelines on eosinophilic esophagitis. United European Gastroenterology Journal, 5(3), 335-358.
2. Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). (2024). Food allergy. <https://www.allergy.org.au>
3. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). (2024). Food allergen labelling. <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au>
4. Spergel JM, et al. (2012). Treatment of EoE with specific food elimination diet. Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, 107(5), 446-450.