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Elimination Diet*

An elimination diet involves removing specific foods that may be causing allergic reactions or signs of intolerance. Common allergens include soy, dairy, eggs, fish, shellfish, caffeine, gluten, and nuts.

Elimination diets typically involve removing suspicious foods for a period of time – from two weeks to a few months – and observing how the body reacts. After the elimination phase, foods are reintroduced one at a time to see whether the symptoms resurface, signaling that a specific food is the issue. Keeping a food diary is suggested to record any adverse reactions.

True food allergies can affect the immune system and cause immediate symptoms such as hives, rashes, puffy eyes, vomiting, and even anaphylaxis. However, many people suffer from food intolerances, and symptoms can be less severe and even show up two or three days after eating the food. Food intolerance symptoms include indigestion, heartburn, nausea, cramps, headaches, and fatigue, among others.

Foods to include:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Meat
- Poultry
- Beans
- Healthy oils

Foods to avoid:

- Soy
- Dairy
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Gluten
- Nuts

Pros:

- Emphasizes whole foods
- May alleviate symptoms immediately
- Increases awareness and mindfulness

Cons:

- Requires discipline and monitoring
- Eliminating certain foods could lead to deficiencies in those areas
- Not a guaranteed method for diagnosing allergies – other psychological and physical factors may affect results

Sources:

Jonathan Brostoff's *Food Allergies and Food Intolerance*

Jill Carter's *Allergy Exclusion Diet*

Elimination Diet and Food Challenge Test for Allergies www.webmd.com [_http://www.webmd.com_](http://www.webmd.com)

About Food Allergy www.foodallergy.org [_http://www.foodallergy.org_](http://www.foodallergy.org)