

Identifying & Managing Food Intolerances

What are food intolerances?

Food intolerances or sensitivities are reactions to foods that can cause inflammation and therefore symptoms in virtually any system of the body. The healthy digestive tract is a selective barrier between the external environment and the body's internal environment. When digestive breakdown of foods is incomplete, food particles may irritate and damage the intestinal lining, disrupt its "seal" and become absorbed into the bloodstream. These large particles are seen as "foreign invaders" by the immune system, which produces antibodies that target them for destruction. Whenever these foods are ingested and absorbed, antibody-antigen binding reactions in the bloodstream can create inflammatory responses including the release of histamine, which can lead to the production of troubling symptoms.

How are food intolerances different from food allergies?

Potentially life-threatening food *allergies* or "immediate hypersensitivity" reactions are associated with IgE (immunoglobulin "E") type antibodies. Food *intolerances* are "delayed hypersensitivity" reactions governed by IgG (immunoglobulin "G") type antibodies. Food intolerances are not-life threatening but are lower-grade, chronic reactions that can be associated with chronic inflammatory symptoms produced up to days after intake of the trigger food(s).

What symptoms can be caused or worsened by food intolerances?

Body System	Symptoms
Gastrointestinal	Gas, bloating, colic, constipation, diarrhea, gastritis, canker sores, heartburn/reflux, abdominal pain, flatulence, nausea, vomiting, irritable bowel syndrome
Genitourinary	Bed-wetting, recurrent urinary tract infections, nephrosis
Dermatological	Eczema, psoriasis, hives, acne, redness, rosacea, dark

	circles under the eyes
Immune	Chronic infections, autoimmune disorders, frequent ear infections
Respiratory	Asthma, wheezing, recurrent sinus infections, chronic bronchitis, excess mucus in the throat, itchy nose, palate or eyes
Musculoskeletal	Arthritis, bursitis, muscle pain, swelling
Nervous System	Anxiety, irritability, hyperactivity, distractability or poor concentration, “brain fog”, insomnia or hypersomnia, nightmares, fatigue, low energy, low mood
Miscellaneous	Headache, migraine, arrhythmia, hypoglycemia, infertility, weight gain, swelling, water retention, fainting

Adapted from: Pizzorno 2006

How can I tell whether I have food intolerances?

There are two main ways to identify potential food intolerances and their connection to your symptoms:

Food Intolerance (IgG) Testing	Elimination Diet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finger-prick in-office or blood draw performed at Gamma-Dynacare Laboratory ✓ Blood is screened for presence of antibodies to 120 different foods ✓ Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food panels available ✓ Test results indicate concentration of IgG antibodies to each food and identifies which foods to avoid and which to enjoy freely ✓ Obtain support from your 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Removes the most common food intolerances (e.g. gluten, wheat, dairy, soy, corn, eggs, sugar, caffeine, alcohol, yeast, nightshades, shellfish, red meat, pork, processed foods) ✓ Observe for changes in symptoms over 4-6 weeks ✓ Reintroduce each eliminated food, one at a time, for 2-3 days each, while observing for any reactions ✓ Works best for individuals able to plan and prepare whole foods, observe and

<p>Naturopathic Doctor in making healthy substitutions and in optimizing and healing digestive function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Works best where you prefer a concrete list of foods to avoid (including for children); where discernable symptomatic relief and results are desired more quickly; and in cases involving more complex or severe symptoms ✓ Fees for IgG testing (\$327.00) may be covered and naturopathic follow-up visits are covered by most extended health care plans 	<p>document symptoms, avoid “cheat” foods over the full course of the program (at least 8 weeks including reintroductions); where unusual intolerances to traditionally “hypoallergenic” foods (e.g. rice, legumes, almonds, fruits) are not suspected; or to investigate intolerances that are not related to an immune (IgG) response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fees for naturopathic follow-up visits are covered by most extended health care plans
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What benefits can I expect from addressing my food intolerances?

If you identify and remove trigger foods from your diet, you can expect a decrease in symptoms related to inflammation, such as those listed above. Gastrointestinal symptoms, joint or muscle pain, headaches, skin problems, concentration and sleep quality are among the most common concerns we see improvement when addressing food intolerances. In addition, many individuals experience a healthier immune system and overall improvements in energy and well-being. As a bonus, most adults will easily lose 2-10 lbs when their individual trigger foods are removed. Identifying and removing food intolerances is a great step toward creating the right diet for YOU as an individual, which is a key naturopathic approach to helping you experience your healthiest, most empowered life.