

Why a 30-Day Elimination Diet?

The 30-day elimination diet is designed to reduce inflammation, improve digestion, strengthen metabolism, identify food sensitivities, reduce allergic reactions, boost energy, regulate blood sugar and normalize weight. Food is powerful medicine. No other therapy - natural or otherwise - can come even remotely close to accomplishing all of these goals.

It's essential that you commit to making these changes for at least 30 days - without cheating. By removing the foods that most commonly cause problems, you allow your body to rest and recover from whatever symptoms those foods have been provoking. Just one cheat could trigger a whole new cascade of reactions. Don't do it. It's not worth it.

After the program, you may be able to re-introduce some of the foods on the "avoid completely" list, such as dairy (especially cream, butter, yogurt and kefir), white potatoes, white rice, alcohol (in moderation), white rice and buckwheat. But for now, it's best to eliminate these foods to see if they're causing problems.

What Foods Can I Eat?

EAT LIBERALLY:

- **Meat and poultry.** Emphasize beef and lamb, but also pork, chicken, turkey, duck and wild game like venison, ostrich, etc. Organic and free-range is always preferable, but is especially so during this program.
- **Organ meats (especially liver).** Liver is the most nutrient-dense food on the planet. If you don't like the taste of liver, one good trick is to put one chicken liver in each cube of an ice cube tray and freeze them. Then, when you're making any meat dish, dice up one chicken liver and add it to the meat.
- **Bone broth soups.** It's essential to balance your intake of muscle meats and organ meats with homemade bone broths. Bone broths are rich in glycine, and amino acid found in collagen, which is a protein important in maintaining a healthy gut lining. For information on how to make bone broth, [click here](#).



- **Fish.** Especially fatty fish like salmon, mackerel and herring. Wild is preferable. You need to eat three 6 oz. servings of fatty fish per week to balance your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio.
- **Eggs.** Preferably free-range and organic.
- **Starchy tubers.** Yams, sweet potatoes, yucca/manioc, taro, lotus root, etc.
- **Non-starchy vegetables.** Cooked and raw.
- **Healthy fats.** Ghee (clarified butter), coconut oil, palm oil, lard, duck fat, tallow and olive oil.
- **Olives, avocados and coconuts (including coconut milk).** Canned or packaged coconut milk is a good choice for most people. However, if you have digestive issues, you may be sensitive to the guar gum used in these products. Please see this article for more information.
- **Sea salt and spices.**

EAT IN MODERATION:

- **Processed meat.** Sausage, bacon and jerky. Make sure they are gluten, sugar and soy free and organic/free-range meat is preferable.
- **Whole fruit.** Approximately 1-3 servings per day, depending on your blood sugar balance and weight loss goals (if you have high blood sugar or want to lose weight, aim for the lower end of that scale). Favor low sugar fruits like berries and peaches over tropical fruits, apples & pears.
- **Nuts and seeds.** A maximum of a small handful per day, preferably soaked overnight and dehydrated or roasted at low temperature (150 degrees) to improve digestibility. Favor nuts lower in omega-6, like hazelnuts and macadamias, and minimize nuts high in omega-6, like brazil nuts and almonds.
- **Green beans, sugar peas and snap peas.** Though technically legumes, they are usually well tolerated.
- **Coffee and black tea.** Black, or with coconut milk. Only if you don't suffer from fatigue, insomnia or hypoglycemia, and only before 12:00 PM. Limit to one cup (not one triple espresso - one cup).
- **Vinegar.** Apple cider vinegar is especially well tolerated.
- **Restaurant food.** The main problem with eating out is that restaurants cook with industrial seed oils, which wreak havoc on the body and cause serious



inflammation. You don't need to become a cave dweller, but it's best to limit eating out as much as possible during this initial period.

AVOID COMPLETELY:

- **Dairy.** Including butter, cheese, yogurt, milk, cream & any dairy product that comes from a cow, goat or sheep.
- **Grains.** Including bread, rice, cereal, oats, or any gluten-free pseudo grains like sorghum, teff, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, etc.
- **Legumes.** Including beans of all kinds (soy, black, kidney, pinto, etc.), peas, lentils and peanuts.
- **Concentrated sweeteners, real or artificial.** Including sugar, high fructose corn syrup, maple syrup, honey, agave, brown rice syrup, Splenda, Equal, Nutrasweet, xylitol, stevia, etc.
- **Processed or refined foods.** As a general rule, if it comes in a bag or a box, don't eat it. This also includes highly processed "health foods" like protein powder, energy bars, dairy-free creamers, etc.
- **Sodas and diet sodas.**
- **Alcohol.** In any form.
- **White potatoes.** White potatoes are in the nightshade family and can cause inflammation in certain people. Yams and sweet potatoes are not nightshades and don't have this effect.
- **Processed sauces and seasonings.** Soy sauce, tamari, and other processed seasonings and sauces (which often have sugar, soy, gluten, or all of the above).

Caveats & Tweaks

With certain health conditions the basic program above needs further modification:

- **Those with arthritis, autoimmune disease and severe gut issues should also eliminate nightshades and eggs.** Nightshades include potatoes, tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, eggplant, tomatillos, pepinos, pimentos, paprika and cayenne pepper. Nightshades have compounds called alkaloids that can cause inflammation and worsen joint pain in susceptible people. Eggs contain proteins that are common allergens, particularly in susceptible people.
- **Those with insulin resistance, hypoglycemia or reactive hypoglycemia, and those wishing to lose weight, should limit fruit and starchy vegetables.** The total amount eaten each day should equal roughly 400 calories per day of glucose, which is the amount contained in 2 servings of low-glycemic fruit (berries) and two servings of starch (i.e. sweet potato, taro, yucca, etc.). No need to break out the scale and calculator. Just keep these amounts in mind.
- **Those with fatigue, insomnia, anxiety, mood swings or depression should eliminate coffee, tea and all caffeine entirely.** Caffeine stimulates the adrenals and can worsen all of these conditions. Once your adrenal issues have been addressed, you may be able to add them back in moderation.

How Do I Do It?

I recognize this will be a dramatic change for many of you. The best way to do it is to just dive right in. Begin right now. If you procrastinate or delay, it just gets harder.

Also, consider signing up for something like the [Paleo Meal Plan Generator](#) to help you stay on track with recipes and meal plans. Copy the list of foods you can eat from above, and head to the grocery store, farmer's market, butcher or wherever you shop and stock up for the next week. All you have to do is think about what to eat and what not to eat. There are no calories to count, or special ratios to calculate or food combinations to consider. Just eat the foods that are allowed, and don't eat the ones that aren't.



When Will I Get Results?

The first few days can be hard. Your body will be going through withdrawal. Sugar and wheat in particular are addictive and you may notice symptoms like mood swings, strong cravings, irritability and fatigue as your body adjusts to life without them.

But at some point you will recover and start feeling better than you did before you began the program. Your energy will improve, your skin will clear up, your digestion will smooth out, your sleep will get deeper, your moods will stabilize and you'll start shedding some pounds (only if you need to, usually). Aches, pains and mysterious symptoms you've had for ages will — seemingly miraculously — begin to improve.

This program has the **potential to change your life**. I realize that it's difficult, I know how much work it is, and I remember what it was like to cut out all of these foods. I've been there myself. But I also know from my own experience and from supervising many people through this transition that the results are worth the effort.

What are Some Common Pitfalls?

- **Cheating.** I said it before and I'll say it again. Don't cheat. It's not worth it. One piece of bread or one glass of milk could re-start the inflammatory process and throw your body back into the chaos that led you to this in the first place. If you can stick this initial period out, it will get easier. I promise you. At some point you won't even miss those foods you think you can't live without.
- **Fat phobia.** The biggest mistake people make on this program is not eating enough fat. You're eliminating a lot of foods from your diet (bread, grains, beans, etc.), and you have to replace those calories with something. Healthy fat is that something. Fat doesn't make you fat. Food toxins like wheat, fructose and seed oils make you fat. Fat is the preferred fuel source of the body, and should constitute about 60-70% of calories.
- **Obsessing.** Try to relax into this as much as possible. Don't overanalyze what you're eating. Enjoy your food. Make cooking fun and leave time to savor your creations. Find some recipes that look good. You've got real, delicious, nutrient-dense foods to choose from. Trust me, it could be worse.
- **Lack of planning.** If you know you're going out to dinner with some friends this weekend, choose a place that can accommodate your needs. Call ahead and ask if



they have gluten-free items on the menu. Pick a place that has meat and vegetable dishes, and order a salad on the side. Don't put yourself in a situation where you're starving because you haven't planned in advance, and then eat a bagel with cream cheese because that's all that's available. If you're going on a road trip, stock up on paleo-friendly snacks. This is all possible, but it does require some planning and foresight.

- **Lack of support.** No man (or woman) is an island. Making big changes is hard, and the more support you have in doing this, the easier it will go. See if you can enlist your spouse, significant other or a good friend to do this with you. (They may not be eager to join, but they'll thank you later.) Have a "paleo pot luck". Invite friends over to cook with you. Connect with others online following this approach. Ask questions. Get help.

Where Can I Get Recipes & Tips?

Check out [this link](#) at my website for some great free recipes. Also, consider signing up for the [Paleo Meal Plan Generator](#), a web application that generates Paleo meal plans and recipes completely customized to your particular dietary needs.