

Ask Leyla: How can I reintroduce foods after a period of hypoallergenic diet?



Q: I've eliminated my food allergy foods for a period of six months on the advice of my practitioner. What happens now? Will I ever be able to eat those foods again?

A: Unlike immediate IGE-mediated food allergies, IGG foods are 'stealthy', meaning you don't necessarily have an immediate overt reaction like breaking out in hives after eating. But certain foods may be contributing to your current symptoms and complaints like headache, fatigue, mood issues, skin conditions, gastrointestinal upsets, joint and muscle aches and underlying inflammation—to name a few.

By avoiding your food allergens for a period of months, it gives the immune system a chance to calm down so you can safely reintroduce the forbidden foods. And there is a proper way to do that: one food at a time.

For example, if tomatoes, eggs, and wheat were on your list of foods to avoid, reintroduce them one at a time every three days. Add tomatoes to your menu (i.e., in your salad) and see how you feel. If at the end of three days of eating some tomatoes you don't have any return of symptoms, then you can safely add tomatoes back into your diet.

Move on to the next food on your list of forbidden foods: eggs. Have an omelet or hardboiled egg on day one. If no symptoms return, have it again on day two, and then

day three. If you remain symptom-free, eggs are back on your list of foods to enjoy. The same goes for wheat.

Introducing one food every three days in this manner allows you to identify any offending foods that you may still need to continue avoiding. If symptoms return with any of the foods you reintroduce, simply eliminate them again for a period of time and follow up with your healthcare practitioner. A qualified nutritionist can help you navigate food allergies and symptom management.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN