

# Elimination diet guidelines for CFS.

- Commence the elimination diet at a point of relative symptom stability and not at the same time as making other changes, e.g. supplements, medications, activity levels, etc.
- In the weeks before an elimination diet eat a nutrient rich, unrefined and varied diet. Gradually decrease your caffeine intake over this time to minimize caffeine withdrawal.
- Choose the most convenient time to try this diet. For example not around the time of important social occasions, when relatives are staying over or you have little time for food preparation. Ask for the support of your family.
- For 10 days consume nothing but meals made from foods listed in the table below.
  - If there are any foods on this list you know or suspect you may be reactive to, or a close relative is reactive to, eliminate these foods as well.
  - Also if you crave any foods on the below list, exclude this food also, as craving is a common marker for allergy or intolerance.
- Consume a varied diet, eating some vegetables, lamb, rice and oil daily. Plan out meals before hand, making sure you eat proper meals and eat enough calories, carbohydrates (rice and sweet potatoes) and protein (lamb) every day otherwise you may be experiencing a worsening of symptoms. This point about calories is particularly important if you are under-weight. Before starting the diet make a trip to the shops to stock up on the allowed foods.

GRAINS - Whole grain (brown) rice

MEAT - 100% unrefined lamb (non aged/processed/smoked/seasoned/preserved)

VEGETABLES - Cabbage, kale, cauliflower, squash, broccoli & sweet potatoes

OILS/SEASONINGS - 100% extra virgin olive oil & sea salt

DRINKS - Filtered water

*\*Aspirin should preferably be avoided during this period due to it's high salicylate content.*

*\*If possible it is also preferable to avoid anti-histamines during this process as anti-histamines can mask allergy symptoms.*

*\*Some people become constipated on this diet. If this happens use pure psyllium powder (provides bulk) or plain coloxyl (stool softener) as needed.*

- Keep a diary of symptoms throughout this process and note any changes.
- If symptoms worsen, new symptoms appear (e.g. headaches), or food cravings develop in the first 2-4 days, this usually indicates withdrawal from food allergy or addiction.
- If after 10 days certain symptoms have improved, this indicates food reactivity of some kind.
- Add back foods one at a time in a pure form (e.g. corn on a cob not cornflakes).
  - Allow 48 hours between adding new foods.
  - Consume plenty of the foods you are testing (e.g. 2x daily over the 48 hour period).
  - Carefully observe changes in symptoms/signs upon adding back foods.
  - If you react to a food, eliminate it entirely for the time being, and wait until the reaction has completely cleared before adding in the next food.
  - If there is no reaction to a food after eating it regularly for 48 hours, add in the next food.
  - The following order is recommended, which are among the most commonly reactive foods.

1. Pears. (2 pears daily).
2. Dairy (milk or lactose free milk if lactose intolerant).
3. Wheat (in the form of a 100% wheat product).
4. Eggs (whole fresh eggs).
5. Peanuts (whole peanuts).
6. Corn (corn on a cob or canned corn).
7. Soy (canned whole soy beans).
8. Cocoa (sugar free cocoa powder or plain cocoa beans).
9. Yeast (tsp's of baker's yeast or brewer's yeast).
10. Citrus fruits (oranges).
11. Tomatoes (raw or fried fresh tomatoes).
12. Beef (whole beef).

### **Possible meal and snack suggestions:**

- Whole grain rice, lamb and fried/boiled vegetable based dish.
- Mashed sweet potatoes seasoned with olive oil and sea salt. Add fried vegetables if desired.
- Salad made with desired combination of cabbage, kale, carrots, cauliflower, squash or broccoli. Add olive oil.
- Baked vegetables with olive oil and salt.
- 100% rice crackers or rice noodles.
- Carrot sticks.
- Drink several glasses of filtered water per day.

### **Sources of gluten include:**

- Anything containing wheat, barley, rye, oats & spelt.
- Anything that contains the word gluten, gliadin & glutenin.
- Foods which state they may contain traces of wheat/gluten.
- Maltodextrin/malt (if it is derived from wheat or barley).
- Soy sauce (unless or states it is gluten free).
- Bulgur, couscous, durum, dinkie, kamut, semolina & triticale.

Gluten is a protein in wheat, barley, rye, oats & spelt. Many people who react to wheat are reactive to all forms of gluten, while some can tolerate the other forms but not wheat. If you react to wheat consider other sources of gluten may also be a problem.

### **Sources of casein include:**

- Anything containing milk, yoghurt, cheese, butter, cream, ice-cream, goats milk derived products, etc.
- Milk solids.
- Anything that says casein or caseinate.

Casein is a protein in dairy products. There are different reasons people react to dairy products. If dairy primarily causes bloating, stomach cramps & diarrhea, you are likely lactose intolerant. The other type of reaction is allergy or intolerance to dairy protein. This can cause a diverse array of symptoms in people.

### **Sources of dietary yeast include:**

- Yoghurt with fruit, aged cheeses, hard cheeses, processed cheeses, moldy cheeses.
- Bread, sourdough bread, rolls, breakfast cereals, crackers (check label).
- Mushrooms, olives, capers, tempeh.
- Peanuts, peanut butter.
- Liquor, anything made from malt, beer, wine, cider, coffee.
- Vegemite, vinegar, catsup, mayonnaise, French mustard (made with vinegar), salad dressing made with vinegar, sweets, Chinese food, any foods which are obviously moldy.

### **Fructose malabsorption:**

45% of people with ME/CFS and over 1/3 of people with IBS have fructose malabsorption. When adding back pears, if they cause intestinal symptoms (abdominal bloating/cramps, constipation, loose stools, diarrhea or flatulence) you likely have fructose malabsorption.

