

5 Steps to Starting a Restrictive or Allergenic Eating Plan

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Get a baseline

Before changing, it's important to get a baseline. Since you will need to do planning and preparation before making changes to your diet, use that planning time to track your (or your child's) current condition. Log everything you take into your body, put out of your body, sleep, mood, physical activity, even the weather. Note brands of foods eaten. This is a huge help in identifying what actually produces changes.

Plan the changes first

While you're getting a baseline, take a look at your logs and get a strong grasp on exactly how much of what you're eating contains the irritant ingredients. Start thinking about what things you can actually just remove, what things you absolutely can't remove, and of the latter—what things require an irritant-free replacement. A review of the logs will also show how often you ACTUALLY eat these things. If you are going gluten-free, how often do you actually eat bread? And is there something else you can use for those times you ARE using bread without turning to a specialty item? Blanched and destemmed collard leaves make great burrito wraps! Give it some thought. Also, plan out meals, snacks and places where you can get food on the run that is safe. Do this before you make any changes.

Notify people you interact with

You don't need to justify your eating habits to anyone, but it may be helpful to put people on alert so they have the opportunity to support you (or make it clear that they are not supportive so you know how to proceed). If this is for your child, be sure that school or daycare are aware of what is going on and make sure they realize that it's critical for you to know when slip-ups occur.

Implement the changes

It may be helpful to make the changes gradually—replacing one type of food each week. Or it might be easier to stock up after your planning stage and change it all at once. Do what you feel works best for you and your household and/or lifestyle. Continue to keep logs!!

Review and revise

Review your logs each week to look for changes that you might be missing or to confirm that changes (good or bad) connect to a suspected trigger. Be prepared for the reality that what you thought was causing problems may not be causing problems after all—but something else is!

These are just suggestions to help you get to the heart of your health and wellness challenges. If your issue is resolved using these tips... GREAT! Sometimes, the picture is more complicated. If you need additional assistance, let's talk.