

# Food Restrictions May Lead to Further Sensitivity



My specialty is helping clients [calm their food fears and expand their diet](#). When I first meet clients, I ask how their diet became limited. A common scenario is that clients notice additional food sensitivities after restricting their diet. Jennifer is an example. She eliminated gluten and dairy-based on recommendations from her doctor. After a few months, citrus and tomato started bothering her, so she cut them out. She felt okay for several weeks, but then started noticing problems with meat and chicken. This trend continued, and eventually, she was on a very limited diet.

## Prevent the downward spiral:

**Be careful with elimination diets.** They can help pinpoint food triggers, but if not done properly, they can create additional problems. If you decide to follow an elimination diet, be systematic. Follow the diet for a defined period (e.g. four weeks). If your symptoms don't improve, go back to your previous diet. If you are feeling better and you think the diet helped, reintroduce the restricted foods to pinpoint specific triggers and keep eating any foods that are not problematic. If you continue a restriction, try reintroducing in about six months. A registered dietitian can help you with this process. See [Seven Tips for Starting a New Food Sensitivity Diet](#) for more information.

**Reduce, rather than eliminate food.** If you feel better after reducing, consider a trial elimination.

**Replace restricted foods with comparable nutrient-dense foods:** For example, if you reduce wheat (gluten), replace it with other gluten-free whole grains.

**Be skeptical of alarmist nutrition information or miraculous cures on the internet.** Most internet nutrition information is misleading, and doing too much research can create distrust and anxiety about food. Over time, you may get stuck in the [Food Fear & Symptom Cycle](#).

## Tips if your diet is restricted:

**Make your limited diet more interesting with creative preparation.** For example - slice, spiralize or shred raw carrots. Mash cooked carrots with different seasonings.

**Plan your meals.** Meal planning can eliminate the constant worry about "what am I going to eat?" If you spend less time thinking about food, your food sensitivities may improve.

**Slowly add restricted foods back.** In my experience with clients, a slow approach takes patience but is most successful in the long run.

If you are stuck in the Food Fear & Symptom Cycle, consider taking the [Calm Your Food Fears and Expand Your Diet program](#). Breaking free of the Food Fear & Symptom Cycle will make food reintroduction much easier.

Incorporate self-care strategies into your day. Self-care strategies will help you deal with the fear and frustration that are common with food sensitivities.

More ideas can be found at [Eight Tips to Expand Your Restricted Diet](#).

