

# Seven Tips for Starting a New Food Sensitivity Diet



If you suffer from mysterious symptoms, you have probably considered a modified diet, such as gluten, dairy-free, GAPS, SCD, low FODMAP, low histamine. If you are not careful, these diets can cause more problems than they solve. The following tips will help you safely experiment with food sensitivity diets.

**Note:** It is important to [Test for Celiac Disease before Restricting Gluten](#).

## Try a healthy diet first.

If your current diet is unbalanced, try a healthier diet for at least four weeks, before trying a special diet. When following a special diet, most people eliminate processed foods and pay attention to what they are eating. Symptom improvement may be due to a healthier diet, not the modifications.

## Incorporate relaxation breaks

We live in a stressful world! Constant worry and stress damage the body. Incorporating short relaxation breaks throughout the day can improve health. I often recommend relaxation breaks for at least three weeks, before starting a special diet. Compared to a new diet or supplement, relaxation breaks are: free, completely safe, do not add extra stress and are fantastic for overall health (even if it does not eliminate your symptoms).

## Try diets one-at-a-time

People often ask me for help with a meal plan that incorporates more than one restriction (e.g. low-histamine, low-FODMAP diet). Combined restriction diets are difficult because: 1) there's not much left to eat! 2) if you feel better, you don't know which diet was helpful. A better approach is trying the diets one-at-a-time.

## Be systematic

Typically, people approach special diets haphazardly, trying them off-and-on for an unspecified period of time. With this approach, you don't know if the diet is helping or not. Before starting a special diet, decide how long the trial period will be and follow the diet strictly for that period. At the end of the trial, decide if your symptoms have improved and if this improvement has been worth the hassle. A [written action plan](#) can be helpful.

## Don't evaluate the diet until the end of the trial and have realistic expectations

Your symptoms will likely fluctuate throughout your trial which can lead to an emotional roller coaster. On good days, you may be hopeful that the diet is working, but be disappointed on bad days. This constant evaluation is exhausting. Try not to think about it until the trial has ended. It may be helpful to compare your symptoms for a few weeks before starting the diet with your symptoms toward the end of your trial. A daily, written record can be helpful. Additionally, try to have realistic expectations. A special diet may improve your symptoms (or some of them), but it rarely eliminates them.

## Consider trialling different variations of an "inconsistent diet"

Many therapeutic diets are inconsistent, such as the low histamine, low salicylate, etc. In other words, there are several variations on the internet. It is impossible to say which diet is the best, because most are based on theory, rather than research. In this case, pick a variation of the diet and follow it strictly for the specified

time period. If the first variation is not helpful, try a different variation.

## **Reintroduce foods to expand your diet.**

If you plan to continue the restricted diet, consider reintroducing some of the eliminated foods and relaxing your diet as much as possible. Over time, a restricted diet can lead to malnutrition, food fears and difficulty socializing.



Are you following unnecessary diet restrictions? I can [help you](#) sort it out.