

Six Food Elimination Diet Overview

The six-food elimination diet is a treatment for eosinophilic esophagitis (also known as EoE) in which the top known food allergens are removed from a child's diet for a set period of time. Research has shown that this diet has a about a 70% success rate in both improving and even eliminating the eosinophils in the esophagus.

The six foods eliminated from the diet are:

- **Wheat**
- **Dairy**
- **Eggs**
- **Soy**
- **Seafood** (fish & shellfish)
- **Peanuts and Tree nuts** (Nuts include almonds, beechnuts, Brazil nuts, butternuts, cashews, chestnuts, chinquapin nuts, filberts/hazelnuts, ginkgo nuts, hickory nuts, lychee nuts, macadamia nuts, Nangai nuts, pecans, pili nuts, pine nuts, pistachios, shea nuts and walnuts.)
 - * Although the Food and Drug Administration now classifies coconut as a tree nut, children following the 6-Food Elimination diet may be able to consume coconut. Check with the child's allergist or dietitian before consuming coconut.

Important Tips to Follow

- Read all food labels carefully as manufacturers may change ingredients at any time.
- Call the manufacturer if a food label is unclear or if there is any doubt if a food product contains one of the "six foods."
- In 2004, the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) was passed. This act requires that all food labels clearly state the presence of the top eight allergens: egg, wheat, milk, soy, peanut, tree nuts, fish and crustacean shellfish. All labels must include one of the following:
 - The common name in the ingredient list; or
 - The allergen name in parenthesis after the ingredient
Example: whey (milk); or
 - A "contains statement" after or next to the ingredient list.
Example: "Contains wheat, milk"
- The statements, "May contain...", "Processed on shared equipment with...", and "Manufactured in a plant that also produces..." are voluntary statements and are not regulated by the Food & Drug Administration. Consider the following when choosing products:

- Contact the manufacturer for more information (consider asking (1) is there an Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program or Allergen Control Program (ACP) in place (2) does the manufacturer use dedicated production times, dedicated equipment, or has strict cleaning procedures).
 - When in doubt, avoid the product
 - Contact the child's dietitian for guidance if needed
- Avoid sources of cross-contact. This occurs when a food comes into contact with another food or even leftover residue. It is difficult to determine the amount of a particular food that can cause a reaction in EoE because the symptoms do not occur immediately after eating that food. Because of this, it is encouraged to be as careful as possible to avoid the occurrence of cross-contact.

Common Sources of Cross-Contact	Suggestions for Avoidance
Cutting boards, pots & pans	Wash with soap and water
Utensils	Use separate utensils for each condiment jar
Bulk bins	Purchase prepackaged items
Fryer oil	Sauté items at home, avoid fried foods when eating out
Grill	Wrap food in foil before placing on the grill, avoid ordering grilled items at restaurants unless prepared on a clean surface
Deli slicers	Purchase prepackaged meats or from a deli that uses separate slicers for cheese & meat
Toaster	Use a separate toaster for wheat-free breads, toast bread on foil using the oven set at broil, or use reusable toaster bags such as TOAST-it (www.toastitbags.com)

Food Reintroduction

Once a child's eosinophils have cleared and symptoms improved, foods are slowly reintroduced one at a time. After one or more foods are reintroduced, the child will undergo another endoscopy to see if the eosinophils have returned, even if the child does not have obvious EoE symptoms. If there are no eosinophils, the child can continue eating those "safe foods." If the eosinophils have returned, those foods are again removed. The food reintroduction process continues until the EoE team is able to determine the food(s) causing the allergic reaction. Once the team figures out which food(s) cause the child's EoE symptoms, those foods are permanently eliminated from the child's diet.