

FOOD REACTION DIAGNOSIS

Is it allergy or intolerance?



ALLERGY

POSITIVE SKIN TEST

HISTORY:
foods, symptoms
and timing typical
of allergy

INTOLERANCE

NEGATIVE SKIN TEST

HISTORY:
foods, symptoms
and timing suggest
intolerance

SKIN PRICK TEST

COMPLETE AVOIDANCE

- EpiPen (if appropriate)
- Action Plan
- Education of family, carers, teachers and friends
- Monitor and optimize treatment of asthma & eczema
- Environmental control

FOLLOW-UP

If eczema not cleared, consider trial of the ELIMINATION DIET

REVIEW (according to age)

If doubt about clinical significance of skin tests / RAST consider graded dose food challenge under medical supervision

ELIMINATION DIET (strict / moderate / simple) 2-6 week trial

IMPROVED

NOT IMPROVED

CHALLENGES

Natural food
chemicals.
Additives

CHECK DIET

STRICT
ELIMINATION DIET
No gluten,
No dairy foods

INDIVIDUALLY MODIFIED DIET

Liberalise by food
chemical groups
to find threshold
and tolerance

NOT IMPROVED

Wean back to
a NORMAL DIET

WHY DO AN ELIMINATION DIET?



ALLERGIES involve reactions to:
the unique protein components of a specific food.

INTOLERANCES involve reactions to:
specific chemicals common to many different foods.

- Unlike allergies, there are no skin tests or blood tests that can help diagnose intolerances.
- It is not possible to predict from a person's symptoms which particular food chemical(s) they might be sensitive to.
- The history is often unreliable. Although people are usually correct if they think their symptoms are diet-related, they often incriminate the wrong components.
- Most people with food intolerance are sensitive to more than one substance.
- Attempting to eliminate foods or food chemicals one at a time often produces misleading results.

The only reliable way of finding out which food chemicals may be contributing to your symptoms is to **ELIMINATE** all possible trigger substances at the same time, wait for symptoms to subside, and then reintroduce them one-by-one according to a systematic **CHALLENGE** protocol.



UNORTHODOX TESTING FOR ALLERGY / INTOLERANCE:

For information on inappropriate diagnostic tests and treatments for food intolerance visit ASCIA: www.allergy.org.au and navigate to [Position Papers-Guidelines/Recommendations-Advice/Unorthodox Techniques for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Allergy, Asthma and Immune Disorders](#)