



FEPP: Food Re-introduction Phase: The Top 3 Mistakes to Avoid

Today I would like to share with you the top three mistakes most people make when it comes to the food re-introduction phase.

Mistake #1:

Starting the Provocation (Food Re-Introduction) Phase Too Soon

I know it can be boring to be on an elimination diet.

Meals are simple, ingredients are few, and unless you take the time to learn new and delicious ways to combine the ingredients, you might find yourself lusting for a "real meal".

But please follow my advice and proceed slowly. All your favorite foods will still be available once you've completed the process (minus the allergens of course).

Keep in mind your goals and move towards them, even if the going gets tough. Everything worth having is worth a little "sweat equity".

The purpose of the elimination phase is to eliminate just about everything you regularly eat and allow your body to recover and start to feel better. It may take 4 days, or it might be longer, sometimes 7-10 days.

If you're not feeling greatly improved (like one member whose lungs have cleared, another whose post nasal drip -- a condition suffered since childhood -- is gone, and another whose joint and muscle pains have lessened), then stay in your elimination phase. You may not feel perfect after 4 days of elimination, but you should see noticeable improvement.

Once you see noticeable improvement, **only then** is it time to re-introduce foods.

If you're not improving, it's time to hone your spy skills and find out why. Hop on a support call or post to the forum for help.

Remember to read the document *Provocation Phase Instructions and Forms* and watch or listen to any recording guides before reintroducing foods. Print out your tracking documents and away you go.

Start by adding the foods that are the least likely suspects, the ones in the SLOW column of the *Food Reintroduction Guidelines*.

Even though tracking is not a favorite activity, you'll be happy you solve your food mysteries once your data is collected.

Mistake #2: Going Too Fast

When it comes time to re-introduce foods, you may be tempted to introduce several foods at a time or to make a complex meal. This can work well, *if* you tolerate all the foods.

If you don't, it could be very frustrating and confusing.

If you choose to speed the process by adding back several foods, be sure to be extra meticulous in your tracking and observe very carefully for adverse reactions. If you suspect a bad reaction, all those reintroduced foods will need to be eliminated again for at least three days and then reintroduced one at a time in the same manner as for reintroducing suspects.

I generally recommend starting a reintroduction phase with the least likely suspects. If you're anxious to increase your access to a variety of more available foods to eat, you might be tempted to test some of the NO foods. I strongly urge you to avoid this temptation.

When you add a food back and have an adverse reaction, you need to avoid that food for at least four days, preferably a week, before trying it again. You need to have completely recovered from the exposure, both inside and out.

I urge you to avoid all your highly suspect foods and the top allergens for at least a month. Gluten should be avoided for several months (6 months is recommended) before reintroducing.

Mistake #3: Not Eating Enough of a Given Food That's Been Re-introduced

It's important to eat a significant amount of a test food so that you notice a clear enough reaction to determine if the food in question is indeed a food to which you are sensitive.

While just a bite of a highly reactive food will trigger a response, mildly allergenic or mildly reactive foods may not trigger a measurable response unless you eat more of the test food. If you only eat a small amount of the food and then don't see a reaction, you may make the incorrect assumption that it's not a problem for you.

However, even if you don't notice overt outward symptoms, it's possible that you're triggering internal inflammation which slows down your gut and immune system healing.

So when you reintroduce foods, eat a substantial amount of the food for three days. If there's no reaction under those circumstances, you are likely tolerating the test food well and can add it back into your diet.