



Food Elimination/Provocation Protocol (FEPP) Provocation Phase Instructions

FEPP (Food Elimination Provocation Protocol) Background

Food intolerances, allergies, digestive issues and any food that stresses your gut and health through a wide variety of mechanisms are not easy to identify.

There's a lot of controversy over what tests can identify food intolerances and allergies. The debate goes on and on. One of the tried and true methods is to eliminate the food to be tested for a long enough period of time to allow your body to reduce or eliminate the symptoms caused by eating it, then to re-introduce it in a very specific manner so you can more easily observe any impact it has on your health. This method, while highly effective, requires patience and careful tracking.

During the elimination phase, you identify and eliminate the most common allergens, digestive irritants, foods you crave and eat frequently, and any other suspicious foods in your diet. The goal during the provocation phase, aka "reintroduction phase," is for you to identify the foods that 'stress' your health so that you can eliminate them for an extended period of time while you heal your digestion and immune system.

Sometimes the stressor food is very counterintuitive, such as a carrot, or spinach, or rice. It's quite wild. One article called *Food Allergy, Fact or Fiction*, gave accounts of patients with wide and varied symptoms from beverages like tea and coffee, who suffered for many years with many health issues, only to have them go away when they went off tea or coffee.

Food allergies and intolerances cause real symptoms, and often serious illnesses, so must be taken seriously if you truly desire to feel well. Those who take the testing phase very seriously, add foods slowly and track meticulously get the best results. It may feel overwhelming and frustrating at times, but the information you glean can truly change your life. Are you ready to begin?



Provocation Phase Overview

Two forms are provided to assist you in identifying the foods to be tested and determining what order to test them in. A third form is provided for tracking your food, drink, and symptoms.

Form #1: Food Re-Introduction Guidelines Grid

Use this form to guide you in choosing the foods to be tested and in what order. There are three columns.

GO Foods

The first column is labeled “GO.” These are foods identified as safe to eat during the elimination phase as a result of doing a food frequency survey and by the absence of symptoms when you eat them. These are foods that:

- You generally eat infrequently
- You have recently introduced that you eat frequently because of their positive effect on your health
- You can also include here any supplements you are taking that have a positive impact on your health

SLOW Foods

The second column is labeled “SLOW.” Foods in this list may be tested as soon as you feel improvement as a result of the elimination phase.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not begin to add foods until you’ve found a stable place as a result of the Elimination Phase. You must continue to refine the elimination phase diet using the foods in the GO list until you’ve reached a steady state of improved function.



In the SLOW list are:

- Foods you eat frequently but have never observed any adverse effects
- Foods you neither crave nor binge on
- Foods eaten during the elimination phase that you suspect might have caused some upset, but you're just not sure about it
- Any supplements you stopped during the elimination phase that contain no known allergens, along with any new supplements and herbs you'd like to because they are known to be helpful for conditions you are working to heal

NO Foods

The last column is the “NO” foods. This includes:

- Foods that you have a known issue with
- Top 10 common allergens
- Foods you crave
- Foods that are disruptive to your digestive and immune systems
- Foods that cause unstable blood sugar
- Foods for which you suspect an allergy or intolerance

You will begin to test these only after an extended period of exclusion. I recommend at least a month of removal of these foods before testing. For gluten and KNOWN allergens, a longer elimination period is required before retesting. For gluten, the inflammation it causes can take six months or more to heal, so tread carefully when retesting, knowing that if you do have an issue with it, you may disrupt your body for six months or longer by testing it.

A template of this form, along with instructions in each column, is included below, along with a sample blank form.



Form #2: Suspicious Food Tracking Worksheet

This form looks similar to the ***Food Reintroduction Guidelines*** form described above. It too has three columns. You'll fill in this form once you've tested and identified a food as either good, suspicious, or bad. Fill in any known allergies and food intolerances, along with any foods you know you tolerate very well.

As you test foods during the provocation phase, you'll be putting foods in the "bad" column if it's really clear that you did not react well to the food. Otherwise you'll put the food into the "suspicious" column and retest it. I usually use the "three strikes you're out rule." When you put the food into the suspicious column, note the date you tested it.

IMPORTANT: Do not test this food again until you've avoided it for at least 3 days. If you've tested it 3 times and are suspicious after the third, it goes into the "bad" column.

Form #3: Food Allergy Diet and Symptom Tracking Form

Use this form to track your diet throughout the provocation phase. List all foods and drinks along with all symptoms, your energy level, aches and pains or digestive upset and bowel movements.



Steps for Food Reintroduction (Provocation)

- After you have eliminated all foods that you have a known or suspected allergy to, foods you crave, and foods you eat very frequently for a period of 4 days or longer, fill in the *Food Reintroduction Guidelines* grid, following the instructions in the sample.**
- Keep a journal of all foods** you eat and all symptoms you experience.
- Foods in the GO column** of the chart are those you can eat freely, as long as you feel good doing so. If you eat a food in the GO list and it causes a problem, move it to the suspicious foods column of your *Food Reintroduction Progress* chart.
- Foods in the NO column** of the chart are added back **one at a time, every fourth day**. Be sure to test foods in a pure form: for example corn by itself in the form of corn meal made into a cereal or whole fresh corn, rather than corn chowder, corn muffins or corn chips. Eat the food at every meal in generous quantities.
- Foods in the SLOW column** of the chart are generally added back **one at a time, up to three per day**. **You can add them back every fourth day**, similar to the NO foods, or you can add them back in groups. When you add foods back in groups, it's harder to identify the culprit, but it can also speed up the process. For example if you add 4 foods in one day and have an adverse reaction, it will be difficult to determine which of the foods caused the reaction and you'll need to put all of them in the suspicious list. On the other hand, if none of the foods cause a reaction, you can put all four foods on the GO list. As with the NO foods, it's best to test foods in a pure form.
- Take your pulse, check in with your stress level and energy level, and optionally check your glucose** before and after eating each food. Observe for symptoms and changes in pulse. Ensure your blood sugar levels remain below 110.
- Often an offending food will provoke symptoms quickly**, within 10 minutes or up to 24 hours. This is part of the need to really 'tune' into your body, as you can have immediate or delayed symptoms. The symptoms that occur hours or even a day later, the delayed ones, are a bit more difficult to 'link' to eating the suspicious food. This is where vigilant documenting and self-observation come in. If you note symptoms that you believe are linked to this re-introduction of the food, **do not** continue to eat the food.
- For foods in the NO column** of your *Food Reintroduction Guidelines* grid, if you don't notice a reaction, **continue to eat the food for 4 days, at least twice a day**. If no reaction occurs during this time period, congratulations! The food passed the test and can be added to the safe foods column on your *Suspicious Food Tracking Worksheet* and move on to test the next food in the same manner.



- For foods in the SLOW column** you may add back another food while testing the first to speed up the process. You may also add them in groups. Just be very careful in your observation. If you add more than one food at a time and have symptoms, all those foods go into the suspicious column to be retested.
- Many times you'll eat a food one day and feel fine, but the **second day you'll notice that you're reacting to the food**. Signs to look for include: dizziness, fatigue, headache, itching, bloating, nausea, gas, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion, anal itching, sleepy 30 minutes after a meal, ear itching and pulling, nose itching and rubbing, flushing, rapid heartbeat, brain fog, joint pain, and depression.
- If you **notice any reaction during the days of testing**, stop eating it and add the food to the problem foods column of your *Suspicious Food Tracking Worksheet* and wait until all symptoms have subsided before testing the next food.
- If you're **unsure, add the food to the “suspicious foods” columns** before you try it again. Mark the date you quarantined the food on the *Suspicious Food Tracking Worksheet*. Avoid the food for at least 3 days before retesting.
- You may retest a food up to three times. If it's still suspicious after the third test, move it to the "Bad" column. If it appears safe after three times, move it to the "Good" column.

Special Considerations for Some Allergenic Foods

Unlike other food antibodies, which normally have a half-life of 4 days, **gluten antibodies can continue to cause inflammation for up to 6 – 8 months** after eating if you have auto-immune reactions to gluten. If you have chronic symptoms, especially related to fatigue, depression and chronic inflammation, digestive disturbances or an auto-immune condition, we recommend that you wait at least 6 months before testing gluten. Consider getting tested for gluten antibodies before reintroducing any gluten to your diet, with the most reliable test we know of, at www.enterolabs.com.

Some of the foods on the top 6 allergens list are not foods we recommend for optimum health. These are:

- **Dairy products**, associated with increased incidences of certain cancers and with nasal congestion and asthma
- **Peanuts**, which contain inflammatory fats and high levels of aflatoxin, a cancer causing fungus
- **Gluten**, which tends to be inflammatory in many people
- **Eggs**, whose consumption is fraught with controversy



Food Re-Introduction Guidelines

Sample Completed Form

Use this chart to guide you in introducing new foods. Fill in the columns based on the answers to your food frequency before starting the elimination diet unless otherwise specified.

GO	SLOW	NO
Rare Foods: List all foods consumed less than once a month in general.	Frequent Foods: List all foods you consume 4 - 6 times a week.	Top Allergens: List all foods on the top allergen food list. Eliminate these for at least a month before retesting. **
Infrequent Foods: List all foods consumed between once a week and once a month.	Daily Foods: List all foods you consume daily or multiple times a day.	Known and Suspected Problematic Foods: List all foods to which you've ever tested allergic, to which you suspect intolerance, or have read or heard might be problematic and all foods you know that leave you feeling badly.
Moderate Frequency Foods: List all foods consumed 1 to 3 times a week.	Suspects Noted During Elimination Phase: List all foods you suspect you might have had a reaction to during the elimination diet but are not sure about.	Foods You Deliberately Avoid: List all foods you'd never eat no matter the health benefit or deliberately avoid for health or spiritual reasons.
Well Tolerated Supplements: List all supplements you continued to take during the elimination diet and appear to respond really well to.	Supplements You Stopped During Elimination Diet: List all supplements you had been taking before elimination diet but stopped just in case.	Binge Foods and Those You Crave: List all foods you crave, binge on, or would continue to eat even if no longer hungry.



GO	SLOW	NO
	New Supplements: List supplements mentioned during the Module 2 class that you would like to add. (i.e. Glutamine, Arabinogalactans, NAC, zinc and other nutrients, Probiotics, Enzymes etc.)	Energy Zapping Foods: List processed foods, caffeinated beverages and decaffeinated versions of them (coffee, tea, soft drinks), alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, liquor).
	Foods on the “Healing for Gut” List: List foods and herbs you’d like to try from the “Foods that Heal Your Gut” page of the Module 2 Foods that Heal Foods that Hurt pdf.	Foods Containing Oxidized Fats: List margarine, heated oils, shortening, mayonnaise, etc.
	Sugar Substitutes: List all sugar substitutes you’d like to try: i.e. stevia, xylitol, erythritol, etc.	Sweeteners: List sugar, agave, maple syrup, rice syrup, etc

**** IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you have chronic health challenges, including fatigue, hormone imbalance, thyroid issues, autoimmune condition(s), chronic inflammation or digestive problems, gluten should be eliminated for 6 months before retesting for optimum results.*



Food Re-Introduction Guidelines

Sample Completed Form

Use this chart to guide you in introducing new foods. Fill in the columns based on the answers to your food frequency before starting the elimination diet unless otherwise specified.

GO	SLOW	NO
Low Frequency Foods: less than once a month. If there are not enough foods to give you enough variety, expand to foods you eat less than once a week. If still not enough, expand to foods you eat less than 3 - 4 times a week. Be sure to observe carefully. Only introduce SLOW foods after you have been on GO foods for at least 4 - 7 days and are noticing an improvement. If you appear to be reacting to GO foods, you will need to remove them one at a time until you feel better.	Foods You Eat Frequently (or suspect you do not tolerate well):	Common Allergens and Irritants: Gluten** Dairy Corn Soy Eggs Peanuts Strawberries Citrus Shellfish Chocolate Alcohol Coffee Tea Soft drinks Sugar Margarine Mayonnaise Shortening Heated vegetable oils <i>(except olive and coconut)</i>



Use this chart to guide you in introducing new foods. Fill in the columns based on the answers to your food frequency before starting the elimination diet unless otherwise specified.

GO	SLOW	NO

****IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have chronic health challenges, including fatigue, hormone imbalance, thyroid issues, autoimmune condition(s), chronic inflammation or digestive problems, gluten should be eliminated for 6 months before retesting for optimum results.



Suspicious Food Tracking Worksheet

Foods That Make Me Feel Great	Foods I'm Suspicious About	Foods That Cause Me Problems