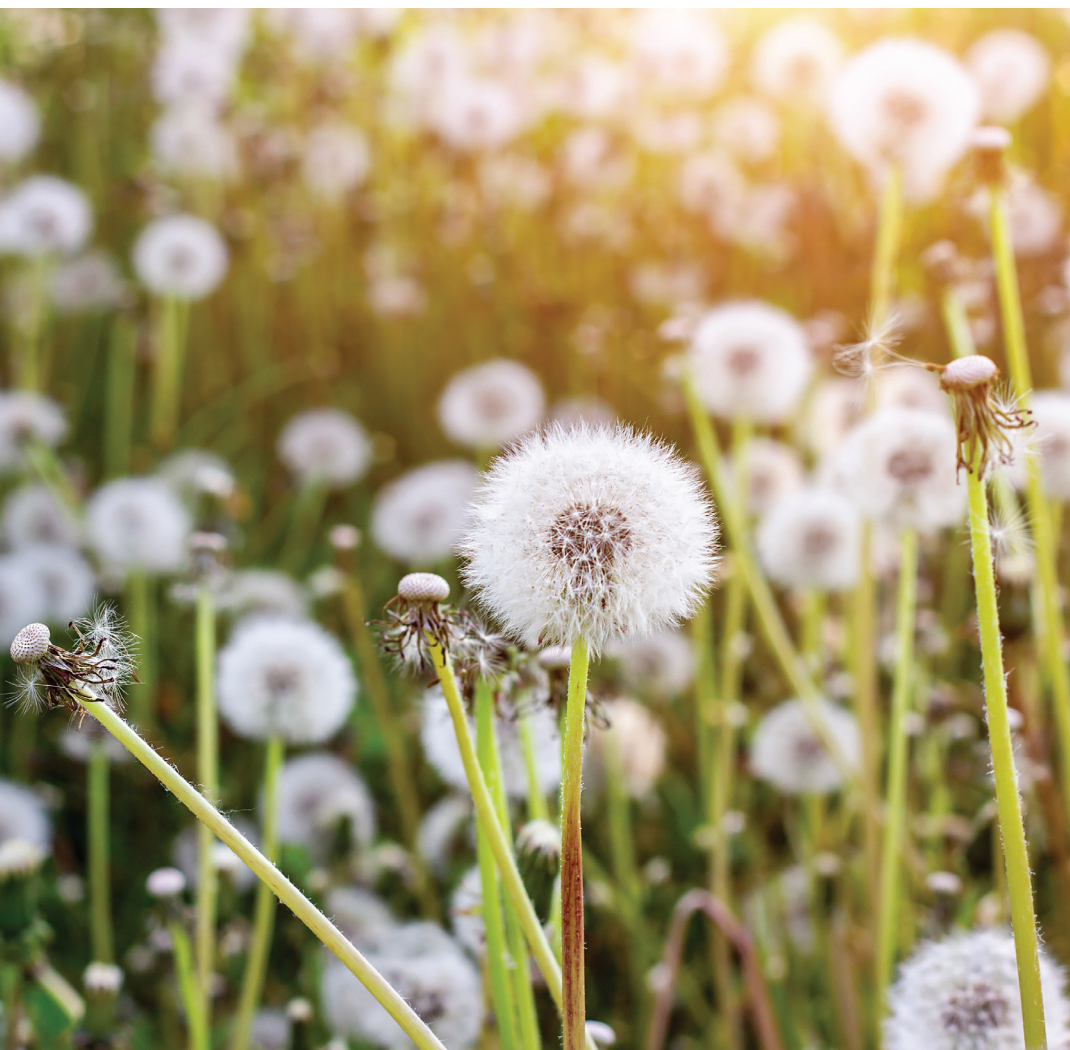


YOUR GUIDE TO

Reducing Allergy and Reactivity

.....

A simple guide to help you gain control of your
allergies and intolerances.



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Congratulations on starting your allergy and reactivity reduction program!

We are constantly exposed to foreign bodies from our environment, with our respiratory system, digestive system and skin all providing a barrier to protect us from the outside world. Ordinarily, our immune system does an amazing job detecting these foreign bodies and neutralising them so that they do not cause harm to our body.

However, in some individuals their immune system has an abnormal response that causes unwanted symptoms. When this happens, we refer to these substances as ‘allergens’. Fortunately, with targeted treatment, the allergic process can be modified, helping you to become less reactive to substances you’ve always found problematic.

Your Healthcare Practitioner has provided this booklet as a guide because you have:

- Been diagnosed with an allergy or food intolerance;
- Have symptoms related to an allergy you are seeking treatment for; and/or
- Have symptoms that are indicative of abnormal reactivity to dietary components or substances in your environment.



What are allergies and what is reactivity?

What people refer to as allergy or reactivity is an inappropriate immune response to what should be a harmless substance in the environment. This could be pollen, a food item and/or a natural or synthetic chemical or product. Allergy and reactivity symptom severity varies significantly from person to person, ranging from serious anaphylaxis (e.g. an allergic response requiring EpiPen® use) to milder symptoms such as ongoing headaches. Allergies and reactivity can affect more than one bodily system (see common examples in Figure 1), often run in families, and usually affect the same system across generations.

Not everyone with an allergy has an anaphylactic response, but may instead experience other allergic conditions such as hay fever, allergic asthma, atopic dermatitis (skin rashes) or food allergies (e.g. coeliac disease). Allergies often involve the release of histamine, a chemical signal secreted by specific cells when you are exposed to an allergen. It is a combination of an abnormal immune response, and the subsequent release of histamine, that results in a diverse range of physical reactions that may include respiratory symptoms (e.g. sneezing, sinus pain, red itchy nose), gut symptoms (e.g. bloating, flatulence, cramping), and/or skin symptoms (e.g. red itchy rash, hives), amongst others.

Importantly, reactivity is not the same as allergy. Reactivity is also sometimes referred to as an intolerance or hypersensitivity. Food intolerances can be the result of an absence of a specific 'enzyme' or chemical needed to digest a food substance (e.g. those who are lactose intolerant do not have enough of the enzyme 'lactase' to digest the lactose properly). Reactivity may also occur in response to natural chemicals in foods such as naturally occurring histamine, or due to added chemicals (e.g. food additives). Intolerances tend to be more chronic and have less obvious systemic symptoms, making it harder to directly associate what you have eaten as a cause of your symptoms. For example, chronic headaches, sinus congestion, variable bowel motions, skin rashes, poor concentration, mood changes and energy slumps may all be due to reacting to something in your environment. Your Practitioner can help you figure out whether your diet and environment is responsible for these common symptoms.

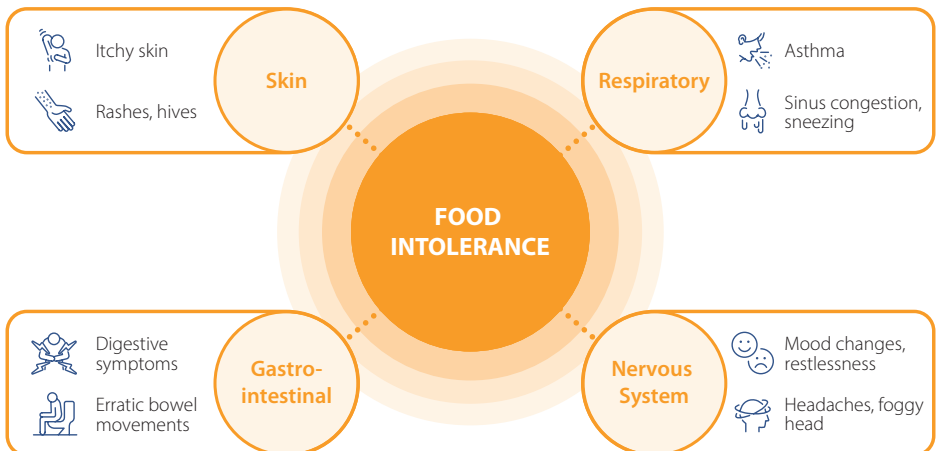


Figure 1: The symptoms of food reactivity can be diverse.

How reactive are you?

Reactivity varies among individuals, it can even vary at different times for the same individual depending upon their state of health and allergenic burden, i.e. the dose or level of exposure to factors they are sensitive to. The more reactive you are, the less likely you will be able to tolerate certain offending foods. In addition, highly reactive individuals are often sensitive to more than one substance. How rapidly symptoms appear and how severe they are can also vary. For example, symptoms may begin within an hour or two, but often develop after several hours, or even a day or two later; with more severe reactions lasting up to several days.



Did you know?

Allergies are considered one of the fastest growing chronic diseases in Australia.



How much of the allergen you are exposed to matters

You may have found that smaller doses of foods you react to have no immediate effect, whereas larger doses result in a much more severe reaction. The same may be the case if you react to something within your environment; for example, pollen. This dose dependant reaction is referred to as your 'threshold of tolerance'. In addition, eating small amounts of the food components you are reacting to over a long period of time may lead to a build-up in your system; with the cumulative effects causing chronic and/or recurrent symptoms, even though the cause may not be immediately obvious - see Figure 2 (C). For example, eating one slice of bread, as per Figure 2 (A), may not result in any reactive symptoms; however, eating a slice of bread, a bowl of pasta and a slice of cake, as per Figure 2 (B), may result in bloating, fatigue and headaches, making it hard to determine exactly what is causing your symptoms.

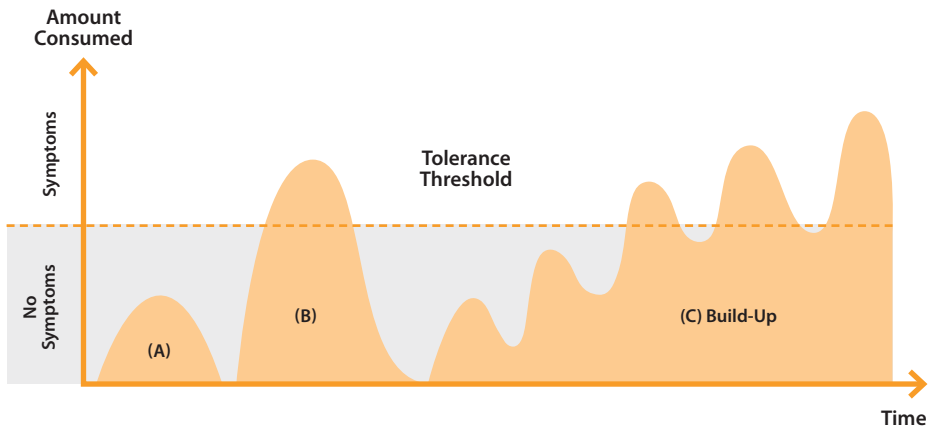


Figure 2: Tolerance threshold (example).

"It has been a really eye opening experience to see how my diet affects my symptoms."

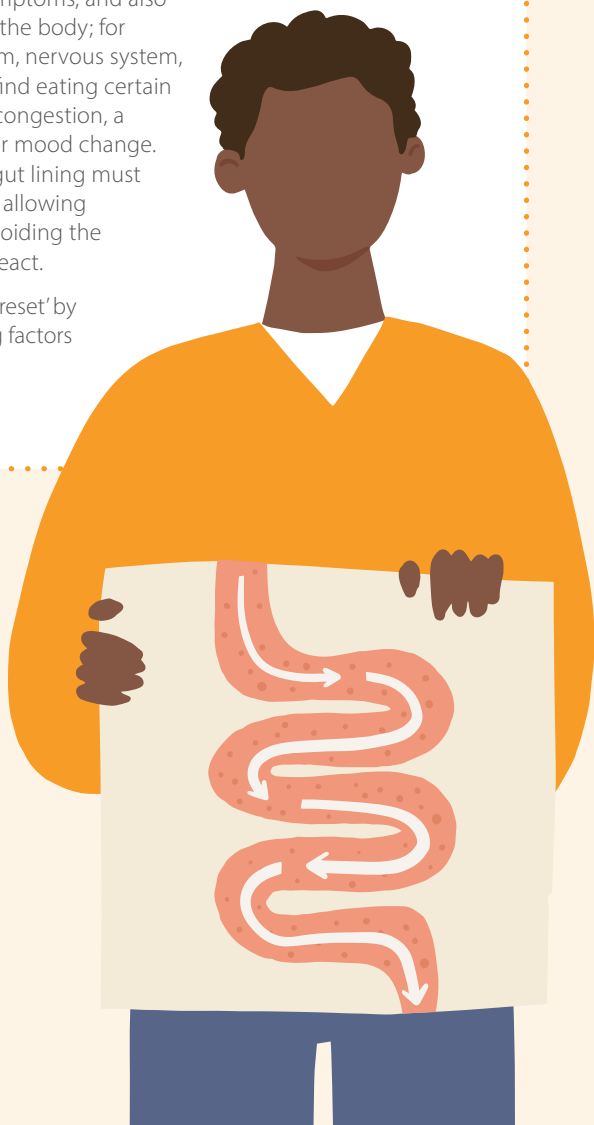


Reducing allergic reactivity


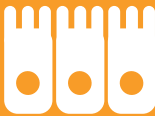

The key to reducing reactivity symptoms is by improving your threshold of tolerance. One of the key ways to do this is by supporting good digestive system function and health.

There is a strong connection between the health of the gut and immune reactivity, as foods you eat can alter microbes in the gut which regulate immune function, as well as cause inflammation of the digestive tract lining. This can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, and also trigger reactions in other areas of the body; for example, in your respiratory system, nervous system, or your skin. This is why you may find eating certain foods results in headaches, sinus congestion, a rash, or maybe an energy slump or mood change. To reduce allergic reactivity your gut lining must be repaired, while simultaneously allowing your immune system to rest by avoiding the substances that are causing it to react.

Your immune system can then be 'reset' by addressing some of the underlying factors that cause it to be over reactive.



Allergy and reactivity: contributing factors

	Diet Foods themselves are problematic or exacerbate allergy and reactivity.
	Digestion Poor digestive function (i.e. breakdown of foods).
	Microbiome Alteration in microbial balance.
	Gastrointestinal barrier A damaged or inflamed gut lining.
	Immune system An overstimulated immune system.

Symptoms of allergy and reactivity may include:

			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eczema• Rashes• Flushing• Itching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sinus• Sneezing• Watery eyes• Cough• Wheeze	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain• Bloating• Diarrhoea• Constipation• Reflux	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Migraine• Fatigue• Pain• Mood disturbances

Which symptom picture are you?

Allergy and reactivity symptoms can vary significantly from person to person. You may experience symptoms relating to only one body system, or a variety of symptoms affecting different systems. Some common symptoms include:



Head: Itchy throat, itchy/watery eyes, blocked ears, mouth ulcers, headaches, dark circles under the eyes.



Respiratory: Sinus/congestion, postnasal drip, sneezing, itchy/runny nose, mucus, tight chest, wheezing, asthma 'attacks', coughing, feeling chronically sick.



Digestive: Bad breath, bloating (upper and lower gut), nausea, flatulence, cramping, pain in the lower gut, constipation, diarrhoea, variable bowel motions.



Skin: Itchy/dry skin, flushing, rash, rosacea, eczema, psoriasis, hives.



Mood: Poor concentration, 'brain fog', anxious, jittery, low mood, aggressive/short tempered.



General: Ongoing fatigue or energy 'slumps', muscle pain, difficulty losing weight, insomnia, frequent urination.



Children: Restlessness, ear tugging, hyperactivity, mood changes, unusually quiet, bed wetting.

The therapeutic goals of the allergy and reactivity reduction program

Symptom relief: Avoiding reactive food groups and other environmental factors, repairing the lining of your gastrointestinal tract, and allowing your immune system to rest, all help bring about symptom relief.

Address underlying contributing factors: Supporting optimal digestive function and health, an appropriate immune response, and improving detoxification mechanisms helps reset your immune system to improve tolerance.

Reduce ongoing reactivity: Increasing your tolerance threshold can lead to widespread benefits depending upon your situation. This may include eating a greater variety of foods, playing with pets, or walking through the park in spring – without experiencing reactive symptoms.

*"I've been
feeling exhausted
and tired for so long
and now I feel my
energy coming
back."*



Nutritional and herbal support for improved immune tolerance

Your Allergy and Reactivity Reduction Program includes carefully selected key herbs and nutrients that offer comprehensive support, so you can achieve optimal results.

- **NRA2™:** A combination of seven specialised herbs with antihistamine and anti-inflammatory actions, that help provide symptomatic relief.
- **Quercetin and Bromelains:** Anti-inflammatory nutrients that are helpful for the management of allergies, resetting the immune system, and helping minimise respiratory congestion and mucous production.
- **Milk thistle:** Traditionally used to support detoxification and healthy gastrointestinal function. This herb also possesses antihistamine effects beneficial in allergic conditions, particularly hay fever.
- **Reishi and Shiitake:** Medicinal mushrooms that support healthy immune system function. Reishi is specifically useful to reduce wheeze and excess mucous production. These mushrooms help to neutralise antigens, reducing immune system reactivity.
- **Baical skullcap:** A herb with antihistamine and anti-inflammatory actions that has traditionally been used to treat allergic symptoms such as red eyes and eczema.
- **Perilla:** Traditionally used in the treatment of asthma. This herb is also effective for those experiencing seasonal allergic rhinitis.
- **Glutamine:** Helps soothe and protect the gut lining, helping minimise digestive symptoms, as well as reducing immune reactivity.
- **Lactobacillus rhamnosus (LGG®) and Lactobacillus paracasei (LP-33®):** Specific probiotic strains that support healthy immune system function, thereby reducing allergic skin responses, particularly those associated with eczema. These strains also reduce respiratory reactivity symptoms such as a blocked, itchy nose, watery eyes and sneezing.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** High potency fish oil offers anti-inflammatory support to promote a healthy immune system response, helping to reduce reactivity and maintain long-term immune control in people with allergies. A pure, high quality fish oil supplement can be recommended by your Practitioner.

NRA2™ is a trademark of Natural Remedies Pvt. Ltd

LGG® is a registered trademark of Chr. Hansen A/S.



The allergy and reactivity reduction program

This specially designed program is built upon carefully selected herbs and nutrients, a tailored diet, and lifestyle recommendations that will help reduce your reactivity, repair your gut and improve your immune tolerance. This approach will help you gain control of your allergies and reactivity, so you can once more indulge in the foods and activities you enjoy.

Your Practitioner will recommend one of two treatment plans appropriate for you, based on your symptom severity, health history and other influencing factors as determined by comprehensive case taking. Depending on what you want to achieve, you will be guided through either the core Rest and Reset or the extended Rest and Test plan.



Rest and Reset: The six week Rest and Reset plan is suitable for the majority of individuals experiencing symptoms of reactivity, especially if symptoms are mild or the offending dietary or environmental trigger is obvious. Resting from foods you are sensitive to reduces their impact on your immune system; while specialised herbs and nutrients repair the gut and promote healthy immune system function. These factors, when combined, lead to an increase in tolerance – central to providing a long-term solution to over reactivity.

Your Practitioner will tailor your dietary prescription based on your signs and symptoms, and/or test results. 'Resting' from these specific food groups is the first step in building immune tolerance, as it reduces any inflammation affecting your gut lining, which contributes to abnormal immune system reactivity. This may be all that you need to allow your gut lining time to repair and help 'reset' your immune system, thereby increasing your overall tolerance threshold once more.



Rest and Test: While the core program is designed to give you an opportunity to 'reset', your Practitioner may recommend you follow the more comprehensive Rest and Test plan. This option is particularly helpful for those who already suspect which foods are contributing to their symptoms, but are not sure of the specific triggers. This plan allows you to work with your Practitioner to strategically re-test the foods you have been 'resting' from at regular intervals. Following this plan can give you more detailed information regarding your degree of tolerance and/or reactivity to specific foods.

Regardless of which plan you are prescribed, you will have the opportunity to once more reintroduce your food groups, depending on your symptom picture. Your Practitioner will guide you through this process and help you identify your tolerance threshold, empowering you with this new knowledge. If your symptoms change in the future, contact your Practitioner who can help you get back on track.

The importance of sticking to your program

Committing to your Allergy and Reactivity Reduction Program provides you with a unique opportunity to not simply reduce your symptoms in the short-term but achieve an increase in your tolerance threshold and a potential long-term solution to your reactivity. Reducing your reactivity can help you get back to everyday activities you may be currently avoiding, such as playing in the park with your children or pets, mowing the lawn, socialising with friends and enjoying your favourite foods.

Changing your diet can be an exciting challenge

To help you ease into a new way of eating, your Practitioner will provide you with a list outlining which 'foods to enjoy' and which 'foods to avoid' depending upon your dietary prescription. The first step to success is to allow yourself some time to familiarise yourself with all the foods you can enjoy, so you are ready to undertake what may be the most important next step - creating a meal plan.



Avoiding coffee?

Here are some alternatives

- Caffeine-free green tea
- Peppermint tea
- Ginger tea
- Dandelion tea
- Liquorice tea
- Lemon water





Creating a meal plan

Being organised with a meal plan that includes plenty of foods from your 'enjoy' list will help make your program much easier to follow, as well as remove any temptation from foods it is essential you avoid. A meal planning template has been provided on page 15 to help get you started.

Here is a step-by-step guide on how to adjust to making a dietary change:

- First identify all the foods you enjoy from your allowable foods list, then check for any foods you currently eat but need to avoid during your program.
- Make a note of all the recipes and meals that you already enjoy and which are suitable for you to continue to eat – use these to get you started with your meal plan.
- Prioritise and set aside time to look for new recipes containing ingredients from the allowable 'foods to enjoy list' making sure they do not include any ingredients on the 'foods to avoid list'.
- If you find a recipe with one or two ingredients that are on your avoid list, think about whether they can be removed from the recipe or if there is an 'allowed' alternative (e.g. you may be able to replace cow's milk with almond milk).
- Get creative! This can be a great opportunity to try using new ingredients and recipes, escaping from regular food ruts.
- Plan for the whole week including all your allowable drinks and snacks.
- Write a shopping list based on your meal plan that details the amount of each ingredient you will need for the week.
- Allow extra shopping time, as you will need to identify and locate foods you may not be familiar with, as well as check food labels (a helpful guide has been provided on page 16 to assist you).
- Remember to also allow extra time for cooking new recipes, as they may have different cooking times or use new cooking methods.
- Don't be too hard on yourself – almost everyone finds dietary changes challenging at first. It is ok to eat the same few 'allowed' meals until you're ready to explore new foods.

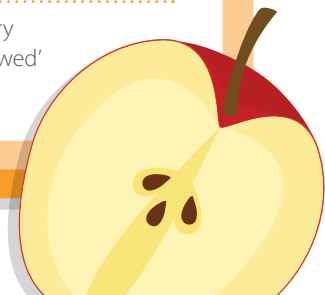


Table 1: Weekly Meal Plan Template

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							
Drink options							

What to look for on food labels

Becoming familiar with food labels will help you make decisions about whether a particular packaged food is appropriate for you to eat while on your program.

Look out for hidden 'avoid' foods in common food items you may think are okay. Always read the labels first!

Tree nuts specifically identified

Summary statement listing all allergenic ingredients starting with the word 'contains'


Water, vegetable oil, vinegar, cane sugar, tomato paste (5.0%), salt, parmesan **cheese** (2.0%), **egg** yolk, maize thickener (1412), **almonds**, red capsicum, **soybean** oil, garlic (1.0%), vegetable gum (415), spice, herbs, **wheat** cornflour, flavour (**wheat** maltodextrin, **sesame**, **milk**), antioxidant (320)

Contains milk, egg, almonds, soy, wheat and sesame


Common allergenic ingredients declared in bold each time they appear

Gluten source (grain source) named in ingredient list


Here are some examples:




Multigrain rice cakes often contain some gluten grains. Purchase plain rice cakes instead.



Breads advertised as 'wheat-free', but are not labelled 'gluten-free', may contain spelt or rye.



Vinegar in ketchup, mayonnaise and mustard is often made from wheat or corn.



Canned tuna may contain textured vegetable protein (a source of soy).

Many tinned food items may also include hidden sugars.

Food additives - numbers to avoid:

Having a knowledge of which foods commonly contain food additives will also help you make suitable choices when on your recommended program. Your Practitioner can provide you with a comprehensive food additives list if required.



What to do if you need to avoid dairy and gluten containing foods

If you have to avoid dairy, a plant-based milk alternative may be used depending upon your allowable foods. Speak with your Practitioner about which plant-based milks you can use on your dietary plan. You can even make your own!

Making plant-based milk alternatives is simpler than you may think:

- 1 Soak 1 cup of almonds* overnight (or for up to 2 days) in the fridge – use enough water to cover the almonds by approximately 2.5 cm to 3.0 cm. Cover with a fine, clean cloth.
- 2 Drain and rinse the soaked almonds under cold water. Discard the soaking water.
- 3 Combine the almonds with 2 cups of water in a blender (using less water will make the milk thicker, using more water makes the milk thinner).
- 4 Pulse then blend at the highest speed for 2 minutes or until the almonds have become a pulp.
- 5 Line a strainer with a fine mesh nut or cheese cloth and place over a bowl or jug to hold your milk. Pour your almond mixture into the strainer.
- 6 Gather the nut/cheese cloth sides up and squeeze/press all the almond milk from the almond meal inside with clean hands so you get all the milk possible from your mixture.
- 7 Sweeten the milk to taste using your allowable sweeteners (optional).
- 8 Refrigerate your milk and use within 2 days.

* Substitute other allowable nuts or seeds depending upon your dietary prescription, e.g. Low Histamine: Cashews. Low FODMAPs: walnuts or pumpkin seeds.



How to identify food containing gluten:

Always check food labels to identify ingredients containing gluten that may not be obvious. Fortunately there are a number of gluten-free alternatives, so check your allowable foods list for those you can enjoy instead.

Non-gluten grains	Gluten grains	Other gluten containing products to look out for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rice• Quinoa• Millet• Sorghum• Amaranth• Buckwheat• Corn (if permitted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wheat (bulgar, semolina, couscous)• Spelt• Kamut• Farro• Durum• Barley• Rye• Triticale• Oats (unless labelled gluten free)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soy sauce and other premade sauces• Sausages and processed meats• Beer and some wines• Premade gravy powders• Confectionary• Malted products• Milo• Vegemite

Allergy-proof your environment

If you are reactive to environmental allergens such as pollen, dust and animal fur; implementing a few simple strategies at home can significantly reduce your symptoms. While avoiding environmental triggers entirely can be difficult, limiting your exposure to airborne particles while avoiding food triggers will help your immune system to rest and is important when improving your immune tolerance threshold. The following are some tips to help reduce your exposure to environmental triggers:

- Encase pillows and mattresses in dust mite proof covers.
- Invest in hypoallergenic bedding.
- Wash your bedding at least once a week in heated water (over 54 degrees) with non-allergenic detergents.
- Vacuum once or twice a week using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
- Wear a facemask when sweeping, vacuuming, mowing or dusting, to limit your exposure to inhaled allergens that may be stirred up.
- Close windows during pollen season and wind up car windows when driving.
- Wet dust to help reduce inhaled dust that has been stirred up.
- Filter the air in the house – cover air conditioning vents with cheesecloth or a HEPA filter to help trap allergens.
- Install dehumidifiers to keep the humidity below 50% to help prevent mould growth.
- Avoid areas where mould can collect.
- Limit the number of rugs in your home to reduce dust and mould. Make sure you clean and air any rugs you do have regularly.
- If you have pets, consider keeping them outside.
- Avoid smoking and smokers.
- Use the exhaust fan over your stove to reduce exposure to cooking fumes.



Lifestyle tips while on your program

Socialising

Some forward planning can help you to make easier choices when it comes to eating out. Take a proactive approach when catching up with friends and suggest going for a walk or bike ride instead of meeting for a coffee or a meal. You may wish to see a movie at the cinema, visit the art gallery, or go to the beach!

Here are some handy hints when eating out:

- Fill up on a program-friendly snack before going out. Having some food in your stomach makes it easier to only choose food items and meals that are on your allowable food list. Avoid the temptation of eating something you will react to. It's not worth it!
- Keep a copy of your allowable foods on you if you find it difficult to memorise the details of your prescribed diet. Ask your waiter/waitress about ingredients in dishes to help you avoid foods that are not part of your dietary plan.
- Enquire about any hidden, unwanted ingredients (such as additives), or let them know that you have a food reactivity, so dishes can be modified. Many restaurants are very happy to help – if unsure, call ahead to check if that will be possible.
- Tell your friends that you are following the Allergy and Reactivity Reduction Program to gain control of your symptoms. Don't be afraid to ask for their support. If they have allergy or reactivity symptoms themselves, they may want to speak to your Practitioner for support too.

Stress management

Reducing stress is particularly important when managing allergy and reactivity, as stress reduces immune tolerance and can actually make your symptoms worse. Speak to your Practitioner if you feel you need some additional support to manage stress.



Symptom Tracker

Completing the symptom tracker each week allows you and your Practitioner to monitor your progress throughout the Allergy and Reactivity Reduction Program, measure symptom changes and track/identify any new symptoms.

1	2	3	4
Never / Not at all	Some of the time / Mild	Often / Moderate	Always / Severe
WEEK 1			
S	M	T	W
T	F	S	S
WEEK 2			
S	M	T	W
T	F	S	S
SYMPTOMS:			
NEW SYMPTOMS:			
SUPPLEMENTS:			
Did you take your supplements today?			

1	2	3	4
Never / Not at all	Some of the time / Mild	Often / Moderate	Always / Severe

	WEEK 5							WEEK 6						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
SYMPTOMS:														
NEW SYMPTOMS:														
SUPPLEMENTS:														
Did you take your supplements today?														

Notes: _____

Frequently asked questions

Will I have to make these dietary changes forever?

This will depend on your level of reactivity. If you have identified a specific food intolerance, your Practitioner will work with you to explore a maintenance plan for this item. By systematically reintroducing any identified 'trigger' foods at intervals, it may be possible to establish a new tolerance threshold. In this case many people are able to enjoy these foods again, though it may only be occasionally (e.g. a small amount once or twice weekly). However, if you have a true allergy or anaphylaxis (e.g. peanut allergy), lifelong avoidance is still the current recommendation.

Am I able to eat the 'foods to avoid' occasionally while on the program?

Strict adherence to your program is necessary to get the best results for you. Giving your gut and immune system a total rest from the foods your Practitioner has identified as likely triggers is what allows your immune system to reset. Eating even small amounts of foods you are reacting to means your immune system cannot rest or reset, therefore a new tolerance threshold is difficult to establish. Remember, you only get out what you put in – you owe it to yourself to put in your best effort to get the best results.

Can I take my antihistamines while I am on this program?

Speak to your Practitioner regarding any medication you are currently taking before you begin your program. Many antihistamine medications will be safe to use while you follow your program; however it is recommended you speak with your Practitioner if you feel you need further support with symptom management.

I've completed the Allergy and Reactivity Reduction Program – now what?

Now that you can enjoy picnics in the park, movies with your cat, and have a renewed sense of energy, it is not the time to over indulge in the foods you have been resting from. Together, you and your Practitioner have established a new threshold of tolerance for you to maintain so you can enjoy these daily activities without the burden of allergy and reactivity symptoms. Everyone's situation is different so speak to your Practitioner if you notice any return of your symptoms - before they get out of control. They can assist you in re-establishing your threshold of tolerance for long-term symptom relief.



"Thank you – I feel so much better now – no more gut pain.

I now know what to do to stay healthy."

One last thing...

To help you on your program, here are a few extra tips to keep you on track:

Make yourself accountable

By committing to your program, you are committing to a healthier you. If you could choose the one symptom you would like reduced or resolved, how much would this change your everyday life? Use this to motivate you if you feel like eating foods on your avoid list, and to help propel you towards success while following your program.

Enlist some help

Times may get tough, and you may be tempted to break from your diet at social events or skip those supplements. Why not enlist someone close to you that you may call on for support if needed.

Always remember – you deserve this!

Everyone has the right to optimise their health. Allowing yourself the opportunity to carry out your program is one of the best gifts you can give yourself. Think of this time as an investment into your health bank, the more effort you put in, the greater health returns you will receive.



**Make yourself
a priority.
You get out what
you put in.**

Your Practitioner Contact Details:

