



DietaryHawk

FOOD INTOLERANCE

WHAT IS A FOOD INTOLERANCE?

A food intolerance is an adverse reaction to one or more food substances often found in a range of foods. A food intolerance usually occurs as a result of chemical sensitivities and nutrient malabsorption.

HOW DOES A FOOD INTOLERANCE DIFFER FROM A FOOD ALLERGY?

Food allergies are an immune response to a protein found in a specific food. Food intolerances do not involve the immune system and instead take place in the digestive system.

Unlike food allergies where even a trace of an allergen can cause a reaction, food intolerances work on a dose response threshold. That means that as people consume foods containing a trigger substance over the day, the substance slowly builds up in their system until it exceeds their personal dose threshold resulting in symptoms.

WHAT ARE THEY SYMPTOMS OF FOOD INTOLERANCE?

Symptoms of food intolerance can vary between individuals but common symptoms include:

Nervous system

Fatigue
Poor concentration
Behavioural problems
Headache or migraine

Respiratory system

Wheezing
Chronic cough
Sinus problems

Digestive system

Reflux
Diarrhoea
Constipation
Bloating

Skin

Eczema
Hives

It can be difficult to tell the difference between symptoms of a food allergy and food intolerance. Usually symptoms caused by a food allergy develop very soon after consuming the food whereas food intolerance symptoms can be immediate or they may take 12 to 24 hours to develop.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF FOOD INTOLERANCE?

There are many different types of food that a person can be intolerant to. Most symptoms are triggered by non-digestible carbohydrates, natural food chemicals and food additives.

Non-digestible carbohydrates (FODMAPs):

A collection of short-chain carbohydrates that are poorly digested or absorbed in the small intestine of some people. Non-digestible carbohydrates are considered a major trigger for people with symptoms associated with irritable bowel syndrome.

Natural food chemicals:

Chemicals that occur naturally in some foods. Food chemicals known to trigger symptoms include salicylates, amines and glutamates.

Food additives:

Natural and artificial chemicals added to foods to preserve flavour, colour, appearance and shelf-life. Food additives most likely to trigger symptoms include artificial and natural chemicals, preservatives and flavour enhancers.

HOW ARE FOOD INTOLERANCES TREATED?

Individual food intolerances are determined using an elimination diet under the guidance of an Accredited Practising Dietitian. Once intolerant substances and personal tolerance thresholds have been established, food intolerances can be managed by ensuring consumption of intolerant substances remain below the individual's tolerance threshold.