

FA/11: Common food intolerances

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Most foods require some enzyme activity in their digestion, however when the body cannot produce enough of a particular enzyme required to break down natural substances within food this is when intolerance occurs. When these enzymes are either missing or in short supply, then eating the offending food/s can cause symptoms because part of the content of the food cannot be digested effectively.
- 1.2 Food intolerance is much more common than food allergy, with the onset of symptoms tending to be slower and of which may be delayed by many hours after eating the offending food/s.
- 1.3 With food intolerance, some people can tolerate a reasonable amount of the food, but if they eat too much (or too often) they get symptoms because their body cannot tolerate unlimited amounts. When the offending food/s are eaten on a regular basis each reaction effectively runs into the next one, thereby leading to the development of chronic, almost continual symptoms.
- 1.4 The following guidance outlines the most commonly reported intolerances, however any food can

2.0 Dairy intolerance

- 2.1 Milk may need to be avoided because of an intolerance to either the *protein* element of milk or because of the *lactose* (milk sugar) is not tolerated. If a predisposed person does not know which they are intolerant of then they should avoid cows' milk altogether and other animal milks such as; sheep, goat and buffalo.
- 2.2 With a lactose intolerance, for example, the body lacks the enzyme lactase that breaks lactose down into smaller sugars ready for absorption from the gut. Lactose is too large to be absorbed across the gut wall undigested, and its presence in the gut causes gut spasm, pain, bloating, diarrhoea and 'failure to thrive'.
- 2.3 It is not just milk that should be avoided but also dairy products and foods made with milk and products thereof, for example:

Milk powder (all types)	Milk drinks & shakes	Butter	Margarine
Low-fat spread	Cheese (all types)	Cream	Sour cream
Ice-cream	Yoghurt	Fromage frais	Crème fraîche
Quark	Casein/caseinates	Sodium caseinates	Hydrolysed casein
Milk solids	Non-fat milk	Whey	Lactose

NB: unless foods specifically state free from 'milk'

- 2.4 Any food may potentially contain milk so it is imperative that the full ingredients' listing is read for all manufactured products.
- 2.5 The following list shows examples of processed foods, which may contain milk:

Breakfast cereal	Soups	Baby foods	Processed meats
Pizza	Sauces & gravies	Bread, rolls etc.	Pancakes & batters
Ready meals	Puddings & custard	Cakes	Biscuits
Crackers	Chocolate	Confectionery	Crisps

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Flavoured nuts	Tortillas	Bakery items	Butchers products
Delicatessen items			

3.0 Wheat & gluten intolerance

3.1 Wheat intolerance differs from coeliac disease, the latter being a lifelong intolerance to *gliaden*, part of the gluten proteins. Those persons with a wheat intolerance will experience adverse symptoms from eating 'gluten-free' products, as the remaining components of the wheat will have an effect on them. They may not be able to eat rye, barley and oats, which are part of the wheat family.

3.2 The following foods contain or potentially contain wheat and therefore persons with such an intolerance will need to avoid, unless such food is specifically labelled as being free-from 'wheat':

3.3 **Bread and baked products**, such as;

Bread (all types)	Pitta	Crumpets	Breakfast muffins
Tortillas & tacos	Biscuits & cookies	Cakes & muffins	Pies, tarts & flans
Pastry goods	Crackers & croutons	Packet snacks	Breadsticks & rusks
Yorkshire pudding	Pizza		

3.4 **Breakfast cereals**, most cereals will contain some wheat

3.5 **Flour and pasta**, all of these will contain wheat unless they specifically state free from 'wheat'

3.6 **Meat and fish**, such as;

Sausages/Burgers	Salami	Continental sausage	Processed meat
Meat & fish pastes	Scotch eggs	Pate	Breaded/battered fish

3.7 **Vegetable products**, such as:

Vegetable pate	Soups (all types)	Breaded vegetables	Coated onion rings
Tinned beans			

3.8 **Sauces and condiments**, such as:

Gravies	Sauces	Table sauces	Stuffing mix
Casserole mixes	Stock cubes & pastes	Mustard	Baking powder
Some mixed spices			

3.9 **Desserts**, such as:

Puddings	Pastries	Pies, flans & tarts	Doughnuts
Waffles & batters	Crepes & pancakes		

3.10 **Beverages**, such as:

Malted milk	Hot chocolate	Beer & lager	Many wines
Most spirits			

3.11 **Confectionery**, such as:

Liquorice	Chocolate (all types)	Other sweets	
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4.0 Alcohol intolerance

- 4.1 Symptoms may be a direct result of ingesting alcohol, or to the food on which the drink is based, for example, grapes in wine or grain in whisky, however symptoms can also be caused by other substances (component parts) of the alcohol
- 4.2 Alcohol increases the penetrability of the gut, which allows more food molecules into the body, which may explain the reactions of mildly food sensitive people who may not react to the food alone, but only when it is combined with alcohol.
- 4.3 Most frequently, the likely cause of a reaction is not the alcohol itself but the chemicals used to give the drink its flavour, aroma and body. Some of the substances known to cause a reaction are:

Histamine	Yeast	Sulphites	Sulphur dioxide
Additives			

5.0 Yeast intolerance

- 5.1 The following foods should be avoided as they may contain yeast:

Wine	Beer & cider	Stock cubes & gravies	Sauerkraut
Bovril, oxo & marmite	Yeast extracts	Pickles	Jam-open long time
Mayonnaise	Chutneys	Salad dressings	Soy sauce & miso
Ripe fruit & vegetables	Dried fruit	Malt	Quorn
Buttermilk	Sour cream	Synthetic cream	MSG
Yoghurt	Tofu	Ripe cheese	Hydrolysed protein
Citric acid			

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