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FOOD ALLERGY ELIMINATION AND CHALLENGE TEST (7/25)

This handout is designed to help you perform a four day elimination and challenge test to food that has been identified as a possible allergen. This testing should never be done on foods that you are known to be allergic to and that have caused severe symptoms in the past. Rather, this test is designed to identify hidden food allergies, foods that you consume regularly, and possibly in a pattern that is causing symptoms.

1. We have already identified potential food allergy, either by taking a history or skin testing in the clinic. It is important to understand that it is possible to be consuming a food to which you are allergic. In fact, frequent consumption of the food will mask the symptoms of allergy and give a sense of improved health. The test described below is designed to help identify these foods as a possible source of your symptoms.

2. Once we have identified a food to which you may allergic the first step in the challenge test is to identify what aspects of your diet this food is present in. It takes approximately one to two weeks to carefully identify all sources of food that you consume that may contain this potential allergic food. Many of the foods that cause this type of allergy are hidden. For example, milk comes in many forms, including powdered milk being added to processed foods, such as meats and soups.

3. Once you have identified the common sources of consuming the food that we are testing, the next step is to prepare yourself for four days without any consumption of this food. It is usually best to start on a Tuesday, as this will lead to testing on the week-end and less confusion with regard to workday or school day habits and possible affect of work or school performance if the test results in severe symptoms.

4. During the four days without the food from Tuesday to Saturday, it is possible that you may feel worse and have provoked some of your symptoms to a greater degree. This occurs, because during the time that you are not consuming the food there is not the masking affect of the food. If you feel symptoms worsen during the first four days of this test, it is likely that you will find yourself allergic to the food at the day of testing.

5. On Saturday morning, the fifth day of the test, you should consume the food following an evening of fasting. It is beneficial to consume food in its purest form as possible. For example, for milk – a glass of milk, for wheat – cream of wheat without milk, etc.

6. Additional food can then be consumed at the later meals depending on the degree of symptoms.

7. Symptoms will present themselves usually in a delayed form. This means that symptoms will occur hours after consumption of the food. It is important to watch for symptoms 24 hours after the test has been performed. During the test one should note worsening of their symptoms and possibly new symptoms that were not as well identified prior to the testing.

8. If the test is positive and symptoms are severe, antacids may help with abdominal symptoms, and Tylenol and antihistamines may help with headache.