



Dr. Chad Larson [Follow](#)

Dr. Chad Larson, NMD, DC, CCN, CSCS, Advisor and Consultant on Clinical Consulting Team for Cyrex Laboratories

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Could Food Sensitivities be Compromising Your Post-Holiday Dieting Efforts?

It's important to consider how the foods we eat affect how we feel when starting a New Year's diet.



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Be mindful of how the food you eat (both healthy and unhealthy) impacts the way you feel—especially when introducing new foods during a diet.

By Dr. Chad Larson, NMD, DC, CCN, CSCS

As we slowly, grudgingly remove the remnants of holiday festivities, feasts, goodies and other indulgences from our pantries this January, these items are replaced by many of us with resolutions, new fitness attire and a revamped grocery list. The season's culinary gluttony has left many of us feeling bloated, sluggish, overweight and out of shape—and we can always count on New Year's trends featuring the latest fads in exercise and weight loss, promising better health and elevated energy, to get us motivated to right the ship. Unfortunately for many, even the most earnest, committed attempts to make healthy changes for 2017 can leave us feeling unwell.

It's difficult to understand how some individuals can be in phenomenal shape and maintain a healthy waistline and eat whatever they want with minimal efforts while others can eat healthy and workout every day while struggling to lose a pound and simultaneously feeling poorly. The fact is, what works for one person, won't necessarily work for another. All of our bodies are unique, with different biological makeups, requiring individualized care. And the most significant component to feeling healthy is finding the right foods that each of our bodies respond well to for the best dietary results and overall health.

What gets lost in all the trendy diet books and meal plans is that healthy foods can lead some people to feel poorly, for a variety of reasons. Certain foods can cause temporary gas or bloating far worse in some than in others. Some people are allergic to specific nutrient-rich whole foods, often causing obvious immediate reactions. Absorption levels of different vitamins and nutrients in a food can vary from one individual to the next. But perhaps the most unrecognized, life-altering contributor to a body's reactivity can be attributed to autoimmune-related food sensitivities.

The American Autoimmune Related Disease Association (AARDA) reports that approximately 50 million Americans suffer from autoimmune disease. Because genetic disposition to autoimmunity is a huge factor in possible development of an autoimmune disease, avoiding foods that cause inflammation can help suppress the onset of such. There are certain foods, such as those high in sugar, dairy, fatty and cured meats, and alcohol that are known to be generally inflammatory. However, with autoimmune related conditions, an individual's system can have an inflammatory response to a variety of different proteins.

So how does all of this relate to weight loss, or lack thereof? Inflammation occurs from the body's continual attack on what it perceives to be foreign cells or irritants and its inability to fight them off. The body's production of anti-inflammatory chemicals can disrupt its level of leptin, a hormone that regulates your appetite and speeds up your metabolism. Not only can this hinder weight loss, but it can also cause weight gain, which can equate to double-time holiday gain. Plus, if you're eating foods that make you feel poorly, how much exercise do you think you're going to get? And how long do you think you're going to stick with a diet that leaves you feeling unwell? Not long, I suspect.

Avoidance of high-inflammatory foods, including those mentioned above, is a great start to conquer weight loss challenges, better health and feeling good. But if you suspect you may have sensitivity or intolerance to other foods that you can't pinpoint, Cyrex Laboratories, a clinical laboratory specializing in functional immunology and autoimmunity, offers advanced, innovative tests designed to detect and monitor autoimmune reactivities and their possible triggers. The Array 10—Multiple Food Immune Reactivity Screen™ evaluates immune reactions to foods, raw and/or modified, food enzymes, lectins and artificial food additives. The Array 2—Intestinal Antigenic Permeability Screen™ evaluates the permeability of large molecules in the small intestine and helps identify the route of intestinal damage as a result of immune reactivity from environmental or dietary triggers.

It is highly recommended that you be proactive with regular physicals and visits with your healthcare provider to keep your health in check and discuss your concerns, including testing options that might be beneficial for you.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!

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