

Food re-introduction: LOFFLEX diet

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Following remission from Exclusive Enteral Nutrition (EEN), some centres find that returning to a normal diet will lead to a rapid relapse. A gradual re-introduction of foods is therefore recommended. Some patients find that certain foods can trigger their symptoms so this is a useful way to identify any offending foods and subsequently withdraw them from the diet. Every patient is different and as such will respond differently (if at all) to different foods.

The Department of Gastroenterology at Addenbrooke's Hospital believes that the process of food re-introduction is crucial to the success of achieving remission by diet. As a result of years of research and experience they have created the 'LOFFLEX Diet' (LOw Fat, Fibre Limited, EXclusion diet).⁽¹⁾ This is a balanced diet avoiding the foods most frequently reported by Crohn's disease sufferers to cause problems. It allows patients to easily transfer from EEN onto a range of foods that rarely cause difficulties. If after a further 2 weeks they are still feeling well, then the remaining foods can be introduced one by one.

When all foods have been tested it is essential that the Dietitian checks the diet to ensure nutritional adequacy. Although it can be a difficult process for the patient, the clinicians at Addenbrooke's Hospital found that nearly 60% of their patients are still well two years after starting treatment.⁽²⁾ It is unusual for these patients to subsequently relapse.

References:

(1) Woolner JT et al. The development and evaluation of a diet for maintaining remission in Crohn's disease. *J Hum Nutr Diet* 1998; 11:1-11.

(2) Hunter J. *Inflammatory Bowel Disease: The Essential Guide to Controlling Crohn's Disease, Colitis and other IBDs*. Published by Vermilion, 2010.