



AIP QUICK-START GUIDE

What is the Autoimmune Protocol?

The Autoimmune Protocol is an elimination and reintroduction protocol that has been specifically designed to help those suffering from autoimmune disease determine their food allergies and sensitivities, reverse nutrient deficiencies, balance gut flora, and heal their bodies over the long-term. The protocol, otherwise known as “The Paleo Approach,” has been developed and refined by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne, and is outlined in detail in her excellent book, [The Paleo Approach](#). We believe this is the best and most specific elimination and reintroduction protocol for those with autoimmune disease, and that following it can give a person the best chance to come up with their own personalized healing diet.

Which foods are avoided?

In a nutshell, during the elimination-phase of the Autoimmune Protocol a person would remove all grains, legumes, eggs, dairy, nuts, seeds, nightshade-family vegetables as well as food additives and chemicals from their diet. These foods have been shown in research to exacerbate “leaky gut,” and removal promotes gut healing and gives the immune system a chance to calm. Looking for a complete chart? Check out the printable lists that accompany this guide!

Which foods are emphasized?

The Autoimmune Protocol is not purely about avoiding certain irritating triggers, but equally is about adding in nutrient-dense, whole foods that reverse micronutrient deficiencies, balance gut flora, and enable the body to undergo a healing process. Some examples would be bone broth, organ meats, fermented foods, cold-water fish, shellfish, and a colorful array of fruits and vegetables.

Do I need to be 100% compliant?

In order to give their immune system adequate time off from potential food triggers, it is absolutely essential to do the elimination phase at a time when a person can be

100% compliant, including cross-contamination. This is why it is best not to do the elimination phase during the holidays, periods of high stress or expected travel.

How long do I need to do the Autoimmune Protocol?

It is recommended to try the elimination phase for 30-90 days. If a person starts to see improvement, then they can decide to move on to the reintroduction phase to begin the process of constructing the diet that best supports their healing. If a person is not seeing any improvement after 30-90 days, it is time for troubleshooting (see below).

Which way of transitioning to the Autoimmune Protocol is best?

There are two ways of transitioning to the elimination phase--slow and steady, or cold-turkey. While cold-turkey is the quickest way to get results, it isn't for everyone. Some prefer to remove a category of food (such as grains or dairy) every week over the course of a month or two, until they are fully compliant. Those that favor a cold-turkey transition will want to spend more time preparing, using meal planning and batch-cooking to their advantage.

Is there anything besides food that I should be doing as well?

Yes! While food is incredibly powerful at helping our bodies heal, it isn't the only piece of the puzzle. Learning how to get the right quality and quantity of sleep, managing stress appropriately, incorporating movement, and connecting with others and nature are all important areas to look into.

I'm feeling better! How do I reintroduce foods?

Once a person starts to see improvements from the elimination phase, it is time to consider reintroducing foods. It is important to reintroduce foods slowly and systematically, in an order from least likely to provoke a reaction to most likely. Through this process, a person learns which foods they are actually sensitive to, and can use that information to craft a long-term diet that is best for them. The full reintroduction protocol is beyond the scope of this document, but check out *The Paleo Approach* and *Reintroducing Foods on the Paleo Autoimmune Protocol* for more detailed information.

Do I need to talk to my doctor before starting the Autoimmune Protocol?

Yes! You should always talk to your doctor before starting any new diet or exercise

routine. Depending on your health condition, you may need to have more frequent testing and/or monitoring.

What if I don't experience success on the Autoimmune Protocol?

If a person isn't seeing any improvements during the elimination phase, it is time for troubleshooting. Many of us have been here, and sometimes tweaks like adding more starchy carbs, trying a low-FODMAP approach, treating gut infections, or spending more time on sleep or stress is helpful. This is a great time to get a Paleo-friendly practitioner involved to help you resolve some root causes holding you back from healing ([Primal Docs](#) and [Paleo Physicians Network](#) are both great resources).

Have more questions?

Check out our books, [The Autoimmune Paleo Cookbook](#) and [The Alternative Autoimmune Cookbook](#) for all the details on elimination and reintroduction, as well as dozens of elimination-phase compliant recipes.

In addition, we've addressed some frequently-asked-questions about the Autoimmune Protocol in this series on our blog:

[Q and A volume I](#)

[Q and A volume II](#)

[Q and A volume III](#)

Looking for support?

Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) and connect to the Autoimmune Paleo community worldwide. Use hashtags [#autoimmunepaleo](#) and [#autoimmuneprotocol](#) to get inspired and meet others who are healing their bodies through the elimination and reintroduction process!