

Managing Food Intolerances in Athletes

This playbook is designed to guide through the process of identifying potential food intolerances in athletes and modifying their diets to support gastrointestinal health and optimal performance.

Step 1: **Symptom Tracking**

Instruct athletes to maintain a food diary, noting what they eat, the quantities, and any symptoms they experience after eating. This should be done over a period of a few weeks to identify patterns.

Step 2: **Elimination Diet**

Based on the food diary, gradually remove common irritants (e.g., lactose, gluten, FODMAPs) from athletes' diets for a period, monitoring any changes in symptoms.

Step 3: **Reintroduction Phase**

After the elimination period, systematically reintroduce foods one at a time back into the athlete's diet, noting any returning symptoms, to pinpoint the specific food or foods causing intolerance.

Step 4: **Medical Consultation**

If the food intolerance is severe or if there are confusing patterns, refer the athlete to a healthcare provider or dietitian for further evaluation and testing, like allergy tests or systematic inflammation assessment.

Step 5: **Diet Adjustment**

Develop a customized diet plan avoiding the identified triggers, ensuring that nutritional needs are still met for the athlete's health and performance requirements.

Step 6: **Ongoing Monitoring**

Regularly review and update the athlete's eating habits and symptoms to accommodate changes in training, lifestyle, and tolerance levels.

General Notes

Nutritionist Collaboration

It's important to work with a sports nutritionist to ensure the athlete's diet remains balanced and sufficient in energy, macro, and micronutrients after eliminating problem foods.

Record Keeping

Athletes should be encouraged to keep a detailed log of both their dietary intake and any symptoms to assist health care providers in diagnosis and management.