

Food Test Next-Step Card

Purpose: Use this card before buying a food-sensitivity panel or changing your diet because of a result. It is a conversation aid, not a diagnosis tool.

1. Start With a Safety Check

Choose the first lane that fits your situation.

What is happening?	Best next move	Do not use a panel to...
Hives, swelling, breathing trouble, faintness, or a rapid escalating reaction after a food	Seek appropriate urgent / allergy assessment.	Decide it is safe to reintroduce the food at home.
Blood in stool, black stool, unexplained weight loss, anemia concern, fever, severe or worsening pain, or a clearly new bowel pattern	Move medical review above routine food testing.	Explain warning signs as a food sensitivity.
Gluten / wheat symptoms with possible celiac clues	Ask about celiac testing before going gluten-free.	Use a consumer panel to replace celiac testing.
One food or food group seems repeatable, and amount and timing matter	Track the pattern; discuss a structured, bounded food trial or targeted testing route.	Turn one result into a lifelong avoid list.
Symptoms are broad, vary with the week, or have not improved with repeated food restriction	Review the broader IBS pattern, sleep, stress, medicines, and medical context.	Assume every symptom comes from one food.
Your safe-food list is shrinking, eating feels fearful, or you are losing variety	Pause further restriction and ask a GI dietitian or clinician for support.	Keep removing foods because a panel has a long list.

2. Ask One Question Before You Buy

“What exact decision would this result change—and is this test validated for that decision?”

If the answer is only “it might give me more foods to avoid,” pause. A broader list is not necessarily a clearer plan.

3. If You Already Have a Report

Bring these notes to a clinician or GI dietitian:

- the report name and date;
- the foods flagged and the foods you are already avoiding;

- what happened after the food, how quickly, and whether it was repeatable;
- amount eaten, meal context, stool pattern, pain / bloating, sleep, stress, and medicines or supplements;
- any red flags, family history, prior tests, and the one decision you need help making.

4. Keep the Goal Small and Safe

- Protect medical testing that may still be needed.
- Learn one pattern at a time when a food trial is appropriate.
- Reintroduce and personalize where safely possible; do not build a permanent broad avoid list by default.
- Get help sooner if food fear, under-eating, weight change, or medical complexity is growing.

Helpful Next Reads

- [Which medical tests may fit before further restriction](#)
- [Sort IBS, SIBO, and food intolerance first](#)
- [Use structured reintroduction to test tolerance](#)
- [Check your food list before removing more foods](#)

Evidence Boundary

Broad food IgG panels should not be treated as a diagnosis of food allergy, food intolerance, or every IBS trigger [ref](#). A positive at-home food panel does not by itself establish food allergy [ref](#).