

# 5 WAYS

## DIETARY RESTRICTION CAN DEVASTATE MENTAL HEALTH

Health professionals often recommend food restriction as a safe, natural treatment for almost every medically-unexplained symptom. However, the long-term effects can be debilitating.

### Social Isolation

Social gatherings with friends and family usually revolve around food. A restricted diet and food-related fear can lead to anxiety and interpersonal conflict at social gatherings. It is easier to stay at home! Over time, social isolation can leave a person depressed and anxious.

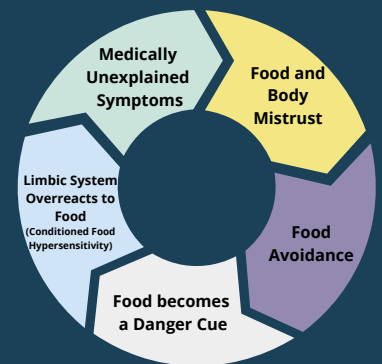
### Food and Body Mistrust

When people believe they are food intolerant, they often see their body as weak – especially if they are given a diagnosis (e.g. you cannot eat tomatoes because you have histamine intolerance). This mindset becomes more ingrained with additional diagnoses and intolerances.

### Conditioned Food Sensitivity

Negative food messages create fear and a slippery slope for being drawn into the Food Avoidance & Sensitivity Trap (FAST). Worry, food beliefs and avoidance lead to conditioned food sensitivity, a limbic system overreaction to food. When people get stuck in the FAST, their food sensitivities and symptoms escalate.

Simplified Food Avoidance & Sensitivity Trap  
Wendy Busse 2020



### Meal Prep Becomes a Stressful Chore

Making everything from scratch is time-consuming. Life ends up revolving around planning, shopping, and cooking.

On the other hand, some people do not have the time or energy and end up eating the same thing over-and-over.

### Losing the Joy of Eating

Joy and pleasure are essential for happiness and mental wellbeing. The emotional and psychological experiences of eating pleasurable food are ways in which we can fulfill this need. A severely restricted diet and the accompanying anxiety robs the joy of eating – reducing food to no more than fuel for living.

Dietary restrictions often lead to anxiety and depression. Ironically, many people restrict their diet to reduce inflammation and improve their medically-unexplained symptoms. However, stress increases inflammation, so their efforts are often counterproductive.