

Why Go Gluten Free? By Holly Stokes, The Brain Trainer

It seems there's quite a buzz about going gluten – free. What is all the buzz about and what are the health benefits?

You can have a gluten sensitivity without having the full blown allergy, called Celiac's disease. It is estimated that as much as 1 in 5 people has a gluten sensitivity, although the gluten allergy numbers are much lower. Gluten sensitivity can turn into an allergy over time. If you notice symptoms of gluten sensitivity outlined below, it could benefit you to do a gluten free trial.

What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, oats, and barley.

Our wheat has been genetically engineered in the last 100 years to increase the gluten content. The gluten is responsible for making bread soft in the middle and crusty on the outside. As a result, the wheat we use now has a much higher gluten content than the wheat of our grandparents' generation, or our ancestors by even an estimated 100%.

Hunter and gatherer cultures had a lot fewer grains in the diet than the cultures of today.

Different people have different sensitivities. It is estimated that 20% of the population may have gluten sensitivity or allergy.

A gluten allergy unchecked may possibly develop into a later chronic condition. There has been a connection found between auto-immune disorders and food allergies. See Dr. Shari Lieberman's *The Gluten Connection*. Those with diabetes may be as high as 26% reactive to gluten.

If you experience any of these symptoms, you might benefit from going gluten free. You may have a gluten sensitivity if:

- ❑ You feel bloated especially after meals
- ❑ You find your fingers swell up some days that you can't wear rings
- ❑ You feel you gain weight easily by eating bread
- ❑ You have difficulties with sleep

- ❑ You have an upset stomach after a meal with gluten
- ❑ You feel tired after a meal with an inability to concentrate
- ❑ Irritable Bowel Syndrome or a “sensitive stomach” that gets upset after meals.

To see if you may be gluten sensitive, you can do a gluten-free trial run. You must be very strict for 2 weeks to make sure that gluten and the gluten reaction are out of your body.

What you may notice: losing a lot of weight as water weight in the first couple of weeks, reduction of swelling (noticeably fingers), it may even out blood sugar, clear skin, feeling more focused and find it easier to concentrate.

A Gluten -free diet will not be missing any essential nutrients. Many health food stores have substitutes, but be careful because a lot of “gluten-free” labels have substituted rice flour for wheat, making it high on the glycemic index. High glycemic foods remember create blood sugar and insulin spikes and causing the body to gain weight.

Best ways to go gluten free: Wheat, flour and gluten are often added to products as a thickening agent, so read all labels, and stay away from wheat, rye, oats and barley or any derivatives of them.

- ❑ Avoid packaged foods
- ❑ Read all labels, even if it says gluten-free
- ❑ Avoid soups and dressings at restaurants
- ❑ Avoid soy sauce and Chinese food – Bragg’s Liquid Aminos is a great substitute.
- ❑ Avoid deli meat – often has gluten added.

If you are doing the 2 week trial test to see if you may be gluten sensitive:

- Keep a daily journal and include a brief summary of your health issues on a daily basis, for example, if you have inflammation, digestive upset, swelling, sinus problems, etc. Note when such symptoms are occurring.

- Include starchy vegetables: yams, lentils, beans, squash, flax seeds are great for fiber.
- Good substitutes for the gluten grains (wheat, rye, oats and barley) are: Quinoa, Buckwheat Groats (interestingly not related to wheat), Wild Rice, Corn Tortillas (medium glycemic index)
- Health Food stores have great alternatives including flour mixes, baking mixes and more.

Some food sensitivities may be shifted by changing our mental categories and associations of the foods that cause the reaction. From research, we can see the psychological aspects of allergies as demonstrated through studies of asthmatic children. In studies involving children it was found that 50% of the children (who had known allergies) had an allergic response when given an inhaler labeled with the allergen, although it was only filled with harmless saline. When these same children were given an inhaler labeled with the anti-dote (filled with saline), 100% of them recovered.

This study and other studies like these point to a mental connection with the allergy response. NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) offers an alternative for allergy therapies by addressing these underlying mental patterns.

NLP: Neuro-Linguistic Programming can address the underlying mental and emotional aspects of allergies and food sensitivities. In NLP Perspective, an allergy is simply a mistake of the immune system, the mind and body have created an alarm reaction in response to certain foods. The body then reacts with inflammation and the allergy response. NLP processes can help re-educate the immune system and the body's neurology to recognize allergens as harmless and nonthreatening.

These methods, especially for those experiencing severe allergies should be supervised by a medical professional.

*This article is an excerpt from the book, *Lighten Up! The Health Coach's Guide to Nutrition in Action* by Holly Stokes, see more details here:*

www.lightenup.me/nutritionguide.html