

THE BETTER HEALTH NEWS

CELIAC DISEASE AND MUSCULOSKELETAL PROBLEMS

GLUTEN

Celiac disease is an immune reaction to eating gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye.

In patients with celiac disease, eating gluten triggers an immune response in their small intestine. Over time, this reaction produces inflammation that damages the small intestine's lining and prevents absorption of some nutrients (malabsorption).

The intestinal damage can cause weight loss, bloating and sometimes diarrhea. Eventually, other organs can be deprived of vital nourishment, including the brain, nervous system, bones, and liver.

In children, malabsorption can affect growth and development. The intestinal irritation can cause stomach pain, especially after eating.

Many of the practitioners reading this deal with pain and musculoskeletal problems. According to research appearing in *Acta Chirurgiae Orthopaedicae et Traumatologiae Cechosovaca* (2015;82(4):308-12), celiac disease may be the cause of osteomalacia, pre or postmenopausal

osteoporosis more severe than expected, and refractory to medication, osteoporosis in men under 55 years of age, recurrent bone fractures in the limbs, large joint arthralgia or arthritis of unclear etiology, erosive spondyloarthropathy (particularly in patients with the history of chronic diarrhea), anemia and associated autoimmune disorders (type 1 diabetes mellitus or autoimmune thyreopathy), and in women with secondary amenorrhea or early menopause.

The article goes on to say that celiac disease should be considered in patients that do not respond well to standard treatment. Also consider celiac disease for patients who suffer from recurrent fractures and in patients who develop osteoporosis at a young age.

Some think that many people are becoming sensitive to gluten because of the hybrid wheat produced in the 1970s. It is shorter, sturdier and hardier. Unfortunately people were not exposed to the proteins in the wheat prior to the 1970s.

GLUTEN SENSITIVITY 2

WHERE DO YOU FIND GLUTEN 4

FREE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE 5

WHAT CAN YOU EAT ON A GLUTEN FREE DIET? 6

GLUTEN SENSITIVITY

Gluten (from Latin gluten, "glue") is a mixture of proteins found in wheat and related grains, including barley and rye. It gives elasticity to dough, helping it rise and keep its shape and often gives the final product a chewy texture.

Gluten is the composite of two storage proteins, gliadin and a glutenin, and is conjoined with starch in the endosperm of various grass-related grains. Worldwide, gluten is a source of protein, both in foods prepared directly from sources containing it, and as an additive to foods otherwise low in protein. It is appreciated for its visco-elastic properties.

Celiac disease (CD) is an autoimmune disorder that can occur in genetically predisposed people where the ingestion of gluten leads to damage in the small intestine. When people with celiac disease eat gluten, their body mounts an immune response that attacks the small intestine, causing damage to the villi and severely affecting nutrient absorption. The damage to the intestine also places a huge burden on the immune system. Children with CD will usually have digestive symptoms (abdominal bloating and pain, constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.) and may have fatigue, short stature and failure to

thrive. CD can also cause dental problems, behavioral problems and ADHD. Adults with CD may have unexplained anemia, fatigue, joint pain, osteoporosis, depression, anxiety, migraine headaches, seizures, canker sores, skin problems (itching or rash), missed menstrual periods, infertility or PMS.

We are starting to hear more about gluten sensitivity that is not celiac disease (CD). Non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS). NCGS was discussed in a recent issue of the Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism (suppl 2:16-26. doi: 10.1159/000440990. Epub 2015 Nov 26). It is distinct from either CD or wheat allergy, and is much more common than CD (which only affects about 1% of the population).

NCGS is more common in adults, especially females between the ages of 30 and 50, but there have been pediatric cases. Symptoms include an irritable bowel-like syndrome characterized by abdominal pain, bloating, or bowel habit abnormalities (either constipation or diarrhea). Other systemic manifestation include "brain fog", headache, fatigue, joint pain, muscle pain, eczema, depression and anemia.

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Some studies have explored the relationship between gluten ingestion and neurological and psychiatric disorders. Neuropathy, autism, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety and even hallucinations may be associated with gluten consumption in some patients. The symptoms of NCGS usually abate when gluten is removed from the diet and return when it is eaten again. Unfortunately, no biomarker is sensitive and specific enough for diagnostic purposes; therefore, the diagnosis of NCGS is currently based on establishing a clear-cut cause-effect relationship between the ingestion of gluten and the appearance of symptoms by a standardized double-blind, placebo-controlled gluten challenge.

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WHERE DO YOU FIND GLUTEN?

Obviously a gluten-free diet, you need to avoid wheat, barley, spelt, kamut and rye. Some recommend that all grains should be avoided because of the possibility of cross-contamination.

Gluten can be found in a lot of food additives. (there may be gluten-free versions of some of these):

- MSG
- Modified food starch
- Textured vegetable protein
- Hydrolyzed plant protein
- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein
- Hydorgenated starch hydrolysate
- Hydroxypropylated starch
- Pregelatinized starch
- Vegetable gum
- Vegetable protein
- Extenders and binders
- Maltodextrin
- Dextrin
- Maltose
- Non-dairy creamer
- Natural & artificial flavors
- Smoke flavors
- Natural & artificial colors
- Caramel coloring and flavoring
- Soy sauce
- Miso
- Bouillon cubes
- Candy (may be dusted with wheat flour)
- Canned soups
- Cheese spreads
- Chocolate (may contain malt flavoring)
- Processed meats (sausage, cold cuts, etc.)
- Mixes for dips and sauces
- Instant teas and coffees
- Mayonnaise
- Mustard
- Sour cream (may contain modified food starch)
- Dry roasted and honey roasted nuts
- Gravies
- Vitamin supplements (but not those from Biotics Research—all of their products are gluten-free)

From the list, it should be obvious that anything that is processed or that has food additives should be avoided. There are packaged foods that are labeled “gluten-free”, and you should look for that label when buying any packaged food.

Dairy is possibly a problem if the cow is fed gluten grains. A lot of people sensitive to gluten cannot tolerate dairy. The Celiac Disease Foundation has dairy on its list of permitted foods.

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WHAT CAN YOU EAT ON A GLUTEN-FREE DIET?

It can be discerned from the list of foods on page 4 that those on a gluten-free diet need to avoid food additives and processed foods in general, if they are not specifically labeled “gluten-free”.

You can eat fruits, vegetables, nuts, meats, poultry, fish, beans and legumes. Dairy, according to the Celiac Disease Foundation, is permissible.

While some groups say to avoid all grains, the Celiac Disease Foundation has a list of permissible grains. Oats, if labeled “gluten-free” are permissible. If they are not so labeled, there may be cross-contamination with gluten containing grains.

According to the Celiac Disease Foundation, permissible grains (and starch containing foods) include:

- Oats (if labeled gluten-free)
- Corn
- Soy
- Rice
- Potato
- Tapioca
- Sorghum
- Quinoa
- Millet
- Buckwheat groats (kasha)
- Arrowroot
- Amaranth
- Flax