

Gluten 101



We've been hearing the word gluten for some time now...WHAT is up? For the newbies, I thought I'd write a simple "Cliff Notes" version of the issue.

Humans have been eating bread for millennia, what's the big problem now?

Well, things were fine when nature was overseeing natural hybridization, but in the 1960's, a movement began to [hybridize](#) wheat in the lab to increase yields. No safety tests were done. The 1990's saw even more changes in the grain. At least 5% of the proteins in wheat now were NEVER in the food supply before. We have not evolved to be able to digest them, so they're wreaking havoc on our bodies.

Who is at risk of gluten sensitivity?

Unfortunately, just about everyone in the U.S., unless you've been eating solely ancient grains that the body knows how to process; these include einkorn and emmer. In addition, the grains need to be processed by traditional methods to neutralize anti-nutrients – soaking and fermenting (true sourdough).

Where do we find gluten?

Everything made with wheat, rye, barley, and triticale (cross between rye and wheat). So we're talking pizza, pasta, bread, breadING, baked goods, cereal, etc. Gluten can be found in oats through cross contamination but gluten free oats are available from suppliers who are careful to avoid this.

What digestive problems can be caused by gluten?

Annoying things like constipation, heartburn, gas and bloating and diarrhea. With time, these will lead to more dangerous

concerns like IBS, GERD, food intolerances, pancreatitis and celiac disease.

Are there other concerns besides digestion?

Oh, yes, non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS) can be responsible for or increase the severity of:

Skin problems – rash, acne, dark circles under the eyes, eczema, psoriasis.

Neurological symptoms – brain fog, ADHD, balance problems, headache (including migraine), increase symptoms of autism and schizophrenia.

Emotional problems – irritability, anxiety, dementia and Alzheimers, depression.

Musculoskeletal issues – fibromyalgia, joint pain and arthritis, chronic fatigue and reduced physical endurance.

Weight gain – especially around the middle and well as an increase in appetite.

Other – asthma, increase in blood pressure, just to name a couple.

Can gluten affect children and infants?

Definitely. Gluten has been found to be a major contributing factor in colic, chronic ear infections, poor sleep, digestive issues and skin eruptions like eczema in children.

So, what IS celiac disease, anyway?

Celiac disease is a digestive disease that severely damages the villi in the small intestine. Since it is in the small intestine that we get the nutrients out of our food, the body becomes malnourished because it cannot take in nutrients to rebuild itself. Significant deficiencies in minerals like iron, magnesium and zinc can cause a multitude of problems.

What does gluten do in the body?

VERY simply, it increases a substance called zonulin which makes our intestines become leaky. Then all sorts of things, like proteins, can leak out and go to the part of our body that is vulnerable (joints – arthritis, brain – fog and

dementia, skin – acne).

What is the incidence of gluten sensitivity?

We know that celiac disease is on the rise, effecting about 2% of the population now, but non-celiac gluten sensitivity may affect between 30 and 40% of us, and “according to Dr. Alessio Fasano at Massachusetts General Hospital, virtually all of us are affected to some degree.” More info [here](#) from Dr. Mercola.

Can you have a problem with gluten and have no noticeable digestive issues?

Certainly. Sensitivity to gluten can show up anywhere.

The best way to see if it is affecting you, is to cut gluten out of your diet for a month (6 weeks is even better). I'd be surprised if you didn't feel better.

Until next time...wishing you **real food**, for **real health**, so you can be **real happy**.