

The Wellness Family

Dr. Curran Keeps You Informed

Eating Gluten-Free

Along with making better health-care decisions and exercising regularly, an important part of living a wellness lifestyle is eating right and following a healthy diet. Many people have chosen to make gluten-free eating a key part of their wellness lifestyle and, as with any major lifestyle change, it's important to have all of the facts prior to making a decision.

Why eat gluten-free?

Gluten intolerance is the inability to digest or break down the protein gluten that is found in many grains, such as wheat, barley, rye, spelt and some oats. According to Alessio Fasano, MD, director of the University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research, this condition can range from a mild sensitivity to gluten to full-blown celiac disease.

Walter Gaman, MD, the author of *Executive Medicine: Optimizing Your Chances for a Longer Life* states that, "People with gluten intolerance or celiac [disease] also appear to be predisposed to developing lymphoma, which is a cancer of the lymph nodes, a risk that goes down with a diet avoiding gluten."

Less than 1 percent of the population actually suffers from celiac disease. And those with gluten-intolerance will typically not recognize symptoms right away, as they are often less immediate and harder to diagnose, occurring as late as several hours to several days after the gluten was first consumed.

What if I'm not gluten-intolerant?

Gluten-intolerance and celiac disease are not the only reasons to choose a gluten-free diet. Research is proving that gluten can irritate many other conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, infertility, thyroid disease and osteoporosis. Additionally, many patients report back that a gluten-free diet has proven helpful in overcoming fatigue and increased weight-loss.

While experts don't know exactly why it helps, research is proving that a gluten-free diet can help with many auto-immune disorders like lupus, chronic fatigue syndrome, Sjogrens syndrome, multiple sclerosis, Graves' disease, Hashimoto's and rheumatoid arthritis. According to a recent article in the Albany Times, some experts "feel strongly that an underlying allergy to

gluten could be a source of neurological insult and auto-immune dysfunction".

How do I eat gluten-free?

Eating gluten-free isn't what it used to be; there was a time when gluten-free foods could pass for cardboard in both taste and texture, but not so today. According to the research firm Mintel, the number of newly introduced gluten-free products has increased substantially in the past five years, growing from 135 to over 800, and the company forecasts a steady 15-25% growth in gluten-free products annually.

With proper labeling and more options, eating gluten-free isn't quite as challenging as it was a little over 10 years ago but it's important to be cautious when introducing new food items into a gluten-free diet. It's



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important to be careful; only introduce one item at a time, then wait at least five days for the body to have a reaction. If after a week there is no reaction then it's safe to introduce another item into the diet.

While this will not be an exhaustive list, the following is a "quick start guide" to eating gluten-free.

Some of the more common grains that are **allowed**:

- Rice
- Corn (Maize)
- Soy
- Potato
- Tapioca
- Beans
- Flax and nut flours

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Grains that should be completely **avoided**:

- Wheat (Einkorn, Durum, Faro, Graham, Kamut, Semolina, Spelt)
- Rye
- Barley
- Triticale

There are also foods, while seemingly gluten-free because of how or where they are manufactured, that have some risk and should be considered cautiously, these include:

- Beers, Ales and Lager
- Breeding and Coating Mixes
- Brown Rice Syrup
- Communion Wafers
- Croutons and Dressings
- Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs
- Energy Bars
- Flour and Cereal Products
- Herbal and Nutritional Supplements
- Imitation Bacon and Seafood

What do I need to know?

The key to a gluten-free diet is becoming a good label reader. Don't eat foods where the labels are not clear. Since 2006 manufacturers have been required to identify if wheat was used in the making of the product. However, manufacturers can change ingredients anytime they choose to, so it's always wise to read the label again. What was gluten-free last week may not be this week.

Fast food franchises are not held under the same guidelines by the FDA as food manufacturers and so will not always have proper labeling. In 2006 McDonald's was sued by several parents of children with celiac disease or gluten-intolerance due to their

fries being inaccurately advertised as gluten-free. The flavoring added to the oil when the fries were pre-cooked contained trace amounts of beef, wheat and dairy products. McDonald's voluntarily admitted to this error, but not all fast food franchises will.

When trying to eat gluten-free remember this simple advice: if in doubt, go without. If it's not possible to verify the ingredients or if the ingredient list isn't available, regardless of how much will be consumed, it's best to abstain. This is especially true for those diagnosed with celiac disease; it doesn't matter how much gluten is consumed, even the minutest amount will cause damage to the small intestine with or without symptoms.

Chiropractic Factor

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor knows that education is the key to making informed decisions for your family and is available to answer questions regarding healthy, wellness lifestyle changes.

For More Information

An excellent source for gluten-free recipes is www.glutenfree.com, however, gluten-free doesn't necessarily mean healthy. Pizza, breads and cakes should always be eaten in moderation.

Glutenfreepassport.com/refcenter/education.html, will provide a great amount of education in the area of gluten-free eating.

The Kid-Friendly Food Allergy Cookbook
ISBN: 1-59233-054-1

The Best-Ever Wheat and Gluten Free Baking Book
ISBN: 1-59233-131-9

Dear Patient,

Dr. Curran is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's dietary choices.

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