

Gluten Intolerance or Sensitivity

There are a spectrum of disorders associated with gluten – from an inability to digest gluten to a diagnosis of celiac disease. Celiac disease is a chronic autoimmune intestinal disorder. When gluten (proteins in the grains of wheat, rye, and barley) comes in contact with the gut mucosa - the absorptive surface in the small intestine damage is caused. Iron, calcium, and folate absorption is often affected, malabsorption of carbohydrates (especially lactose), fat and fat soluble vitamins, protein and other nutrients may occur. Celiac disease involves genetic, environmental and immune factors and can be triggered by gastrointestinal or viral infections, severe stress, surgery or pregnancy. One in one hundred individuals in the US are affected. The following diseases are associated with celiac disease or gluten intolerance: Diabetes, autoimmune thyroid, autoimmune liver disease, Sjogren's syndrome, alopecia areata, osteoporosis, SIgA deficiency. It is often misdiagnosed as lactose intolerance, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, or ulcers. There are specific blood tests but they are not 100% accurate.

Symptoms include: iron, folate, Vit B12 deficiency, Vitamin A,D,E,K and calcium deficiencies, abdominal pain, bloating and gas, indigestion and reflux, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, constipation or intermittent diarrhea or constipation, lactose intolerance, bone and joint pain, easy bruising of the skin,, edema of the hands and feet, migraine headaches, depression, mouth ulcers, menstrual irregularities, infertility in men and women, recurrent miscarriages, elevated liver enzymes, brain fog, hives, sugar craving, dairy intolerance, other food reactions, etc.

Dermatitis Herpetiformis is a chronic skin condition due to gluten intolerance characterized by intense burning, itchy and blistering rash. Initially the rash has small blisters that soon erupt into small erosions. There is a 2:1 ratio of males to females and it is often diagnosed as eczema, contact dermatitis, allergies, hives, herpes or psoriasis.

Treatment is gluten free diet for life. Cheating can result in reactions that last 6 weeks to 6 months.

References:

- *Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon
- Gluten-Free Life by Linda Clark (available at Nan's office)
- *Gluten Free Diet, A Comprehensive Resource Guide by Shelley Case
- *1000 Gluten-Free Recipes by Carol Fenster
- Gluten Free Baking Classics by Annalise Roberts
- Gluten free Every Day Cookbook by Robert Landolphi
- Gut and Psychology Syndrome by Natasha Campbell-McBride

Gluten free websites and resources:

- Savorypalate.com – website for Carol Fenster, includes her cookbooks, some downloadable booklets, her monthly culinary cues newsletter, free recipes.
- Bestbreadrecipes.com – have several gluten free cookbooks for sale, including one for bread machines.
- Whatnowheat.com – cookbooks, support groups
- Clanthompson.com – has developed software for windows, mac, blackberry, palm for drug and food products and gluten status, subscribe to a newsletter, articles, links, ask a doctor or cook
- 123glutenfree.com – lots of recipes, buy packaged mixes (Loveys has some of their products, resource lists
- Quinoa.net – ancient harvest grains site, can purchase product in bulk. Their products are available at all the area grocery stores. Usually find some in the pasta and rice sections of the store.
- Montina.com – Montina brand gluten free flour, ordering information, lots of recipes
- San-j.com – they make an organic, gluten free soy sauce. They use the gluten free soy for most of their salad dressings and sauces
- Glutenfreediet.ca – website for Shelley Case, podcasts, handouts and lots of other good info
- Glutenfreeliving.com – website for the magazine Gluten Free Living