

What is GLUTEN?

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Gluten refers to the proteins found in cereal grain's endosperm (a type of tissue produced in seeds that are ground to make flour). Gluten both nourishes plant embryos during germination and later affects the elasticity of dough, which in turn affects the chewiness of baked products. Gluten is actually composed of two different proteins: gliadin (a prolamin protein) and glutenin (a glutelin protein).

GLUTEN GOOD OR BAD?

The Gluten-free diet has grown in popularity over the past years and gluten-free products are appearing more and more. But why this sudden popularity that is supposedly healthier?

Choosing a Gluten-free diet should not be taken lightly as this may affect your health in a good way or bad.

When *diagnosed* with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, eating gluten free is essential. Gluten then may cause damage in the intestines and prevents the intestines from absorbing certain nutrients.

While gluten has no special nutritional benefit, the whole grains that contain gluten do. Meeting the dietary guidelines is tough if you have to eliminate all gluten-free whole grains. Therefore, if you are not diagnosed with celiac-disease you may benefit from less gluten but it is not necessarily healthier to avoid gluten overall.

ASK FOR HELP

If you are unsure about having celiac disease or a gluten sensitivity, ask your doctor for help to make the healthiest decision!

Source: Mayo Clinic, livescience.com, webmd.com

WHAT CONTAINS GLUTEN?

You find gluten in a lot of products. The top 3 gluten containing grains are wheat, barely and rye. You will also find gluten in unexpected products such as some soups, soy sauce, dressings, fried foods etc.

WHAT IS "GLUTEN-FREE"?

Choose wisely. If diagnosed with celiac disease, it is essential to avoid grains that contain gluten and choose gluten free grain options such as:

- * Millet
- * Brown Rice
- * Buckwheat
- * Amaranth
- * Quinoa
- * Teff
- * Corn
- * Sorghum

THE RISK OF GOING GLUTEN-FREE

Going gluten-free requires you to adopt a new diet in order to get all essential nutrients. Every time you eliminate a whole category of foods you run into the risk of nutritional deficiencies. Another drawback is gluten-free products. Many alternative products are more expensive and often have additives of fats and sugar to assure a better taste. Whole grains including gluten are filled with B vitamins and vitamin D as well as fibers, calcium, folate and iron. If a gluten-free diet is not followed carefully, there is a risk of deficiency.

Gluten free- Yes or No?

When diagnosed with celiac disease or when sensitive to gluten, a gluten free diet is essential. However, if not diagnosed with either, you may support good health by choosing whole grains instead of processed grains (bread, gluten free bread, pasta, cookies, etc.) If you are considering gluten free products for weight loss, select whole grain products and practice portion control instead.