

# Gluten free diet: pros and cons essay



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Within ten minutes of turning on the T. V. or walking in to the grocery store, customers are bombarded with advertisements for gluten free diets, and gluten free diets. Today's society is so focused on the new trend of the day, that they don't care what it is, they are just willing to hop on board because they read an article, a friend told them about it or they saw a 'doctor' say something about it on T. V. In This world of amazing technology, where one literally only has to push a button on their phone and ask a question, so many people are willing to blindly follow what ever the new trend is, even if it is detrimental to their health.

The world constantly needs something to live in fear of, and Gluten is the new evil. A life living in abstinence of gluten can be a good thing, but only if done properly and for the right reason. So many people out there today are miss informed and believe that gluten is bad for the body. This is nothing new, it happens every few years ago. First fats were evil, than they were good and starch was evil, now not all starch is evil, just gluten. Certainly, somewhere in they next five to ten years, the populace will look back, shake their heads and ask themselves what they were doing.

A gluten free diet is the path that some among us must take, but only those that fall under the umbrella of gluten intolerance and all that it covers. Gluten intolerance encompasses a myriad of disorders, including wheat allergy and celiac disease from which the body has an adverse reaction to gluten. Symptoms include bloating, abdominal discomfort or pain, diarrhea, muscular disturbances and bone or joint pain. Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disorder that occurs in genetically predisposed individuals subsequent to the inclusion of gluten in the diet.

The resultant inflammatory response in the intestine generally results in villous atrophy, autoantibody production and systemic effects. Some individuals experience gastrointestinal symptoms, whereas others remain asymptomatic. Coeliac disease was once thought to be a rare childhood disorder, but it is now recognized to affect approximately 1% of the population worldwide (Lee 2009). Choosing to eliminate gluten from your diet is not a decision that should be made lightly, or by oneself.

Those considering a gluten-free lifestyle should look at both the pros and cons of eliminating gluten from their diet. You must first understand what gluten is and what it does, and then you must understand what celiac disease or gluten intolerance is. You need to be aware of the nutritional changes that will need to be made and supplemented in your diet, and once you understand this you can make an informed decision on whether eliminating gluten is the right and healthy choice for you to apply to your life. There are no scientifically proven benefits to a gluten-free diet for those not diagnosed with either celiac disease or a gluten intolerance. In fact, many health care experts believe a gluten-free diet could be lacking in B vitamins (essential for helping your body form red blood cells and generating energy from the foods you eat) and fiber, which are abundant in whole grains that contain gluten. “Moreover, gluten-free products may be higher in carbohydrates, fats and sodium,” says Kupfer (Gottesman, N. 2012).

The first thing you need to understand is what gluten is and where it comes from. Gluten is a protein that is formed when wheat is processed with water and can be found in wheat, rye, barley, spelt and triticale, responsible for giving dough its elasticity (Gottesman, 2012). Gluten is found in many

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starchy foods. The second thing you need to know is what celiac disease or gluten intolerance are. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease that targets the small intestine and can have immeasurable extra intestinal effects (Horowitz, 2011).

Understanding gluten, is a vital step in determining if a gluten free life style is the right choose for one's dietary need. What most people don't understand is that gluten is a protein. In fact, it is the number one protein that people consume that they are unaware of. All people think of when they hear gluten, is starch. But not just starch, processed starch, and people have been trained to see that as bad. However, in reality, gluten serves to provide proper nutrients to the body. Unfortunately, the general population has very little understanding of what they are eating, and why they are eating it.

Close to a quarter of the population have started to cut gluten out of their diet, while this is good for specialty food, their bodies are now lacking in nutrition. What people don't relies is that the intake of fruits and vegetables are supposed to increase. However, most the time what ends up happening is the gluten is simply replaced with an alternative starch such as corn, potato or rice. More often than not, these bread type substitutes that people think are healthier for them are actually higher in fat and starch and have less proper nutritional value.

Individuals consuming a strict GFD generally had similar intakes of energy and nutrients to those of comparison populations, but a higher proportion of carbohydrate intake was obtained from non milk extrinsic sugars and intakes of non starch polysaccharides were low. Compared with the UKWCS sample,

female patients adhering to a GFD had lower intakes of magnesium, iron, zinc, manganese, selenium and folate. In male patients, intakes of magnesium and selenium were particularly low (Wild 2010).

For the one percent of the world that has celiac and the other fourteen percent that are affected with gluten intolerant disorders, a gluten free diet is beneficial and provides stomach and intestinal relief. However for the other fifteen percent of the population that is simply replacing gluten, a necessary protein, for caloric full substitutes; they are simply causing a lack of nutrition for themselves. A gluten free diet is a good and beneficial thing, so long as it is done properly and under the advisement of a physician.