Is Wheat Poison? What's Behind the Rise of Celiac Disease and Gluten Intolerance

We humans have been hunter-gatherers for more than 99.9% of our history. For millions of years, we subsisted on a diet of fruits, nuts, wild vegetables, bone marrow, seafood, meat, and herbs. Grains such as wheat, corn, barley, oats, and rye were not introduced into the diet until about 10,000 years ago. These grains became staples of our diet due to the introduction of agriculture.

Not everyone fared so well in this new agricultural system. As a matter of fact, the majority of people didn't. Relying on agriculture for the most of the diet, restricted variety. Archaeologists have discovered that the switch to agriculture resulted in a dramatic decline in health in every culture.

Our bodies are not well adapted to grains, though some tolerate them better than others. Many cannot tolerate grains that contain gluten at all, in any amount. For other sensitive individuals, long-term consumption of gluten destroys their health and may lead to their death.

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History of Celiac Disease

Celiac disease, also known as celiac sprue, non tropical sprue, and gluten sensitive enteropathy, has probably always been with us. The earliest case, known as the "case of Cosa," is more than 2,000 years old. A young woman's remains were found southwest of modern day Tuscany, Italy. It is believed that she was between the ages of 18 and 20. We know that she had celiac disease because genetic testing revealed the presence of the HLA-DQ2.5. gene, a definitive genetic marker for the disease. Her skeleton also revealed the typical damage caused by malnutrition that is characteristic of a person with celiac disease who continues to eat gluten throughout their lifetime.

Aretaeus, an ancient Greek physician who was believed to practice in the 1st century AD, was the first to describe one of the most noticeable symptoms of celiac disease. Steatorrhea was the most common symptom, a tendency for fatty stools with poorly digested food. He wrote about a mysterious disease afflicting a number of his patients who he called "koilakos," which means "suffering in the bowels." Aretaeus believed the affliction was caused by a lack of heat in the digestive tract. This was a reasonable idea because he found that his patients only partially digested their food. Unfortunately, he did not find the cause or cure. Celiac disease and its debilitating symptoms continued to plague a percentage of the population for centuries, without anyone identifying the source of the problem.

Francis Adams translated Aretaeus' work from Greek to English

at the Sydenham Society of England in 1856. He coined the term coeliacs.

In 1888, Samuel Gee, a British pediatrician, was the first to make the connection between diet and the disease. He said, “If the patient can be cured at all, it must be my means of diet.” Gee experimented with various diets. He showed moderate success by introducing mussels (a gluten free food) into the diet. Eventually though, he put his celiac patients back on a high gluten diet, (no fruit, no sago, no rice, no vegetables) and they got worse, slowing dying a painful death.

Gee primarily fed his patients a diet of thin slices of bread and raw meat. He failed to discover the bread was killing them. Part of the reason was the fact that he was actually treating patients with two different afflictions: celiac disease and tropical sprue, two unique diseases with similar symptoms.

(Tropical sprue is a disease that to this day has an unknown cause, but is believed to be an infection caused by an unknown pathogen. It solely afflicts people in the tropics, and people who have traveled to tropical regions. Damage to the intestines and malnutrition are the typical symptoms.)

Many years later, a Dutch pediatrician, Willem Karel Dicke, discovered a link between celiac disease and wheat. During World War II, food shortages made it impossible for him to feed his patients the standard staples of wheat. Out of necessity, the doctor switched to gluten free alternatives, and his celiac patients thrived under the new diet. When wheat became available again, his patients with celiac disease quickly deteriorated. This lead Dr. Dicke to make the connection between proteins found in wheat and damage to the small intestine. He wrote his thesis on celiac disease and its connection to wheat in 1950.

In the early fifties, Dr. William Holmes Crosby Jr. developed

a less invasive technique to biopsy the small intestine. Then in the late fifties, Dr. Cyrus Rubin further refined the intestinal biopsy technique. This refinement lead to a more accurate diagnoses of celiac disease. Dr. Rubin also defined the diagnostic criteria for celiac disease, proving that it afflicts both children and adults.

Then in the 1970s, the right kind of specialist shed more light on the problem. Anne Ferguson, a gastroenterologist, discovered that celiac disease is due to the body's immune response to gluten in the digestive tract. In 1975, she published a paper in the Lancet, which showed how biopsied tissues from celiac patients react to the proteins found in wheat, while the control biopsies from other individuals did not show this immune response.

Glyphosate and the Rise in Celiac Disease

In 2013, Anthony Samsel and Dr. Stephanie Seneff revealed a correlation between the increasing use of glyphosate in agriculture and the growth of celiac disease in the Western population. (Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Monsanto's Round Up, and it is used extensively in modern-day agriculture and landscaping.)

Celiac disease can originate from genetics, but you don't have to be born with it. Like many diseases, environmental toxicity is increasing its numbers. To further explain this interplay between genetics and environment, the following passage is a quote from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences:

> *Nearly all diseases result from a complex interaction between an individual's genetic make-up and the environmental agents that he or she is exposed to.*

Examples of environmental agents:

- *Mold*
- *Ozone*
- *Pesticides*
- *Air pollution*
- *Cleaning solutions*
- *Dust mites*
- *Some foods and medications*

> *"Subtle differences in genetic factors cause people to respond differently when exposed to the same environmental agent. As a result, some possess a low risk for developing a disease through an environmental insult, while others are much more vulnerable.*

> *"As scientists learn more about the connection between genetics and environmental factors, and how that connection may influence human disease, they'll begin to develop new strategies for the treatment and prevention of many illnesses." — Gene-Environment Interaction*

Anthony Samsel and Dr. Stephanie Seneff have suggested such a strategy. They have urged governments to ban the use of glyphosate in agriculture.

Wheat isn't grown the way it used to be. Conventional methods of wheat farming have become more toxic. For decades now, farmers have been fertilizing their fields with petroleum based chemical fertilizers and using poisonous insecticides. Recently, wheat farming has grown even *more* toxic. A common modern farming practice is for many farmers to douse their fields with Round Up right before the harvest. This practice kills weeds that compete with the wheat. It also increases the yield from the wheat crop, which goes to seed more readily as it is dying. Note that no one claims Round Up is good for us; the biotech folks only profess that it isn't bad for us. Wheat

farming has become so toxic, is it any wonder that allergies to wheat and gluten are on the rise?

How We Make Bread

Consider how we make bread in modern times. White bread is manufactured from only one part of the wheat grain – the starch-filled endosperm. This process removes 4/5 of the nutrition. The starch is then ground into a fine powder. This processing is done at high temperatures and more of the nutrients are destroyed. The flour is then gray, so it is bleached with chemicals such as benzoyl peroxide or chlorine gas.

White bread appears to be healthy when one reads the label that lists its fortified vitamins and minerals, but these poor quality, often petroleum based vitamins and minerals are rarely of any nutritional value. All of the good vitamins and minerals were removed during processing.

Unfortunately, there are other added substances that are harmful to sufferers of celiac disease. Yeast, a common leavening agent used in breads, can make the environment in the digestive tract more suitable to an overgrowth of Candida. Those with celiac disease are particularly prone to Candida overgrowth in their digestive tract.

Some amount of Candida in the body is normal, but too much can be very harmful. When Candida multiplies out of control, it kills off good bacteria, releases toxins, and can actually penetrate the intestines by growing through them. This can cause partially digested food particles to enter the bloodstream through the perforated intestines. This is what is referred to as leaky gut syndrome. This often causes an immune system response, which can lead to more food allergies and a variety of autoimmune diseases. Overconsumption of grains, bread, and especially bread that has been highly processed and sweetened with refined sugars, has been linked with Candida

overgrowth.

Traditionally, Bread Was Healthier

Breads have been made for more than 8,000 years, but yeast wasn’t introduced in baking until 1668. So what did bakers use before yeast? The traditional cultures used to make dough rise were bacteria, microscopic hard working fermenters that were pulled from the air.

Lactobacilli gives sourdough bread its unique flavor. The same bacteria that bakers have used for centuries to bake bread is closely related to the bacteria used to make yogurt and many cheeses.

This bacteria breaks down gluten and other proteins, making grains with gluten more easily digested. In the past, grains were routinely sprouted before grinding them into flour, another step rarely done today.

Some individuals with celiac disease can tolerate sourdough bread if it is prepared in a precise manner: made with sprouted grains and fermented for an extended period of time.

What is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein that is made up of gliadin and glutenin. It acts as an emulsifier and it helps to bind food together. This is why gluten free foods do not usually have the doughy, elastic consistency of foods containing gluten. Xantham gum is often used in place of gluten as a binder for baked gluten free foods.

Candida, Gluten, and Other Food

Allergies

Individuals with celiac disease are commonly allergic to other foods as well. Cow dairy is a very common food allergy for sufferers of celiac disease. Many are sensitive to oats, even when they are gluten free, due to a similar protein. Some are sensitive to other gluten free grains. The reason for this is due to an overabundance of Candida in the intestinal tract. And this is due to sugar.

In modern diets, sugar intake has increased substantially for many years. In other words, along with all of the other changes with how we produce and consume wheat products, we are also seeing a rapid increase in people with an over abundance of Candida due to refined sugars.

Proteins from foods (such as gluten, and many others) enter the blood stream through holes in the intestinal wall due to Candida. Candida, when left unchecked, will actually destroy the protective biofilm and drill holes into the intestinal wall, causing leaky gut syndrome. When foods passes through into the bloodstream undigested, the body sees the proteins as foreign compounds that do not belong, and the body can develop an allergic reaction to the proteins.

Many have reported being able to consume gluten products occasionally after balancing their intestinal flora and healing their gut. It is wise, whenever consuming gluten, to also take a probiotic. Also, we highly recommend not eating any commercial bread. For someone who feels that bread and pasta are too important for them to give up, it’s crucial for them to abstain from wheat products until the intestines are healthy, and then make their own bread and pasta the right way, including soaking, sprouting, and using a strong bacterial culture.

Increased Risk for other Debilitating Diseases

Individuals with celiac disease are more likely to develop several cancers. They are also more likely to have Addison’s disease, anemia, dermatitis, diabetes, thyroid disease, autoimmune thrombocytopenia, sarcoidosis, IgA nephropathy, and Down’s syndrome.

Symptoms

There are over 300 known symptoms of celiac disease. The more common symptoms are listed below.

- Abdominal bloating and pain
- ADHD
- Anemia
- Arthritis
- Anxiety
- Bone pain
- Bedwetting
- Chronic fatigue
- Constipation
- Delayed growth and puberty
- Depression
- Diarrhea
- Eczema
- Failure to thrive
- Infertility
- Irritability
- Irregular menstrual periods
- Joint pain
- Malnutrition
- Migraines
- Miscarriages
- Osteoporosis

- Persistent canker sores
- Rashes
- Seizures
- Tingling sensation or numbness in hands or feet
- Unusually foul-smelling stool, blood or undigested foods in stool
- Unexplained weight loss
- Vomiting

Diet Is the Only Known Treatment

The treatment for sufferers of celiac disease is to avoid gluten entirely, to eat a completely gluten free diet. The FDA does not require food manufacturers to list gluten on their labels. Wheat is required to be clearly labeled, but gluten is not. The following foods contain gluten:

- Wheat
- Barley
- Bulgur
- Couscous
- Durum
- Einkorn
- Emmer
- Farina
- Farro
- Kamut
- Malt
- Mir
- Oats (unless labeled gluten free oats- oats are often contaminated)
- Rye
- Seitan
- Semolina
- Spelt
- Triticale

Gluten is commonly found in breads, bread crumbs, baked goods, beer, biscuits, brewer’s yeast, brown rice syrup (often made with barley enzymes), cereals, communion wafers, crepes, croutons, dextrin, flour tortillas, food coloring, food starch, French toast, granola, gravies, herbal teas, malt vinegar, marinades, sauces, pancakes, pastas, roux, salad dressing, soup, soy sauce, starch, stuffing, waffles, and wine. Any processed food made in a facility that also processes foods with gluten may be contaminated.

Other non-food items that may not be gluten free include:

- Lipbalm, lipgloss, lipstick
- Supplements
- Pharmaceuticals
- Vitamin and mineral pills
- Over the counter medications
- Playdough (some kids will eat copious amounts of the stuff when playing with it)

This list is not meant to be comprehensive. Many processed foods contain gluten, and unless the package says certified gluten free it probably isn’t. Many items that one might think are gluten free like corn flakes and rice cereal use malt or barley extract as a sweetener. Restaurants that do not offer gluten free menus cannot guarantee that their food is gluten free. And sadly, many that do offer gluten free choices contaminate the food while preparing it.

Conclusion

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease, and like all autoimmune diseases, the body’s immune system attacks the body’s tissues. In the case of celiac disease, T cells attack the lining of the small intestine in response to gluten being

passed through the digestive tract. This damage to the small intestine makes individuals with celiac disease more prone to cancers of the intestine. When an individual with celiac disease eats gluten, their symptoms can vary drastically in severity. Ingesting gluten can cause severe symptoms on one occurrence and only mild symptoms the next, which can confuse and delay an accurate diagnosis.

Many individuals with celiac disease suffer in silence, living their lives in constant pain and discomfort, because they have yet to be diagnosed.

Like most autoimmune diseases celiac disease affects more women than men. Women are more likely than men to be misdiagnosed as well and more likely to be told that their symptoms are “in their head”. This is one of the reasons why many sufferers of celiac disease are likely to ignore their symptoms until they become unbearable.

Thankfully, celiac disease is not the mysterious death sentence that it used to be in ages past. Now there are gluten free menus, gluten free options at the grocery store, and naturopathic ways to detox from gluten. Even the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church provide gluten free communion wafers upon request.

We know more about this disease and its symptoms than we ever have before. We also understand that gluten destroys the cilia in the intestines, the part of our anatomy that pulls nutrients into the bloodstream. If a person with this disease continues to eat gluten, malnutrition can result because the body is so damaged it is unable to properly metabolize nutrients from food. Individuals with celiac disease are more likely to be diagnosed with other autoimmune diseases such as lupus and Hashimoto’s thyroiditis.

We highly recommend that anyone with any autoimmune disease completely remove gluten from their diet and concentrate on

healing the gut. Anyone with a history of gluten intolerance needs to heal their gut and balance their flora. Check out *How to Kill Candida and Balance Your Inner Ecosystem.*

Recommended Supplements:

- Floramend-Prime by Thorne
- Shillington's Intestinal Cleanse
- Formula SF722
- MicroDefense – Pure Encapsulations

Further Reading:

- *How to Kill Candida and Balance Your Inner Ecosystem*
- *The Fascinating Bacteria in our Gut, and How it Affects Our Whole Lives*
- *The Reasons Gluten Intolerance and Celiac Disease Are On the Rise*
- *How to Cure Candida*
- *Fermented Foods Optimize Your Health*
- *No More Gluten – How I Found Health After MS*
- *How Gluten can Affect Your Brain, Gut, and Skin*

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- *Sources of Gluten* – Celiac Disease Foundation