

Gluten free (GF) diets are on the rise....not only in health care facilities where ailments are being treated, but also in restaurants, convenience stores, and retail markets.

What is gluten?

This is the protein found in a group of grains, (WBRO) namely wheat, barley, rye and oats. Oats although they do not contain the culprit gluten, are generally included in this group because they are processed in the same machinery as the other grains thus may contain levels of gluten dangerous to some individuals.

Who is asking for these products?

A gluten free diet may be requested for individuals with gluten sensitivity or gluten allergies. Symptoms and severity will vary from individual to individual and may include hives, swelling, abdominal cramps, nausea and asthma. Of course if severe enough, extreme swelling could cause death (anaphalactic shock) as well but this is rare.

A more serious condition is the genetic disorder called Celiac Disease (CD) a.k.a.Gluten Enteropathy in which the absorption of food nutrients through the small intestine is impaired by an immune response to the intake of foods containing gluten. When a person who has CD consumes gluten, the individual's immune system responds by attacking the small intestine and inhibiting the absorption of important nutrients into the body, thereby causing malnutrition. It has been determined that one in every 133 individuals have CD but less than 3% of these people have actually been diagnosed. Everyone with the disease does not show immediate symptoms and oftentimes misinterpret these symptoms so that the disease goes untreated. Three criteria for the disease to manifest itself: 1. individual must have the genetic makeup associated with CD. 2. If the gene is lying dormant it may be triggered by an emotional or physical event (child birth) 3. Gluten must be in the diet for the symptoms to manifest.

Why are we hearing about it more now than ever before?

It is only within the last 25 years that this disease has been diagnosed and treated. Prior to that, the symptoms manifested themselves, causing severe problem and ultimately death. Today, individuals following GF diets are leading healthy lives and bearing children, passing on the genetic disorder. So today more people are informed and are asking for gluten free and more children are coming into the world with CD and gluten sensitivities.

Hidden sources of gluten... so read the label carefully:

- HVP hydrolyzed vegetable protein, unless made from soy or corn
- Flour or Cereal unless made from pure corn, rice, potato or soy
- Corn chips commonly contain wheat flour
- Modified Food Starch unless it specifies derived from arrowroot, corn, potato, tapioca, waxy maize
- Vegetable Gum unless from carob bean, locust bean, cellulose, guar, arabic, aracia, tragacanth, xanthan or vegetable starch.
- Soy Sauce unless you know that it does not contain wheat
- French fries that have been coated with starch, unless they specify that it is potato starch
- Baking powder
- Couscous, Bulgur, Farina, Dinkle, Spelt, Emmer, Fu (Asian dried form of gluten), Graham, Kamut, Matza, Mir, Semolina, Triticale, Wheat Berry, Wheat Germ, Wheat Nut

Foods that are naturally Gluten Free:

- Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Meats (unprocessed)
- Grains: Rice (all types), Cassava (tapioca), Corn or Maize (cornmeal, corn flour), Dasheen (taro flour), Arrowroot, Kasha, Job's tears, Sorghum or Milo, Wild Pecan Rice, Wild Rice
- Nuts, legumes and seeds (which may be ground into flour) include Flaxseed, Almond, Acorn, Cottonseed, Chestnut, Peanuts, Quinoa, Lentils, Kudzu, Soy or Soybean, Sunflower seed
- Popcorn, Potato flour, Risotto, Sago, Sweet Potato

Delicious Gluten Free selections from Sysco Foods of NNE :

Blount Portuguese Kale Soup packed fresh in 4/4 lb bags

FoodShouldTasteGood Chips: choose from Multigrain, Jalapeno, Olive, Sweet Potato 24/1 oz bags

6622221 French Meadows Brownies ind wrap to preserve freshness 48/2.82

6622199 French Meadows Choc Chip Cookie ind wrap to preserve freshness 48/2.12