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WHY WHEAT FREE?

Wheat was first grown in the Middle East over ten thousand years ago but the wholesome wheat products of ten thousand years ago differ greatly from refined white flour today.

It is the most widely consumed cereal in the Western world today and more than a billion people use it as a staple in their diet. It forms part of many of our most common foods including bread, breakfast cereals, pasta, pastries, biscuits, cakes, sweets and cheese crackers, and is used in many convenience or packaged foods as a thickener. It is even in mustard powder and gravy granules. Many prepared meats contain wheat, i.e. sausage meat (contains Rusk), burgers, fish cakes (breadcrumbs), tinned meats. Cheap coffee often contains wheat or corn products.

Wheat production has almost doubled since the turn of the century. It is intensively farmed and cultivated using many pesticides and grown on a massive scale worldwide.

Using modern production methods only about 70% of the grain is used.

Wheat is one of the grains associated with the protein gluten, which is also found in barley, rye, and oats. Today we are talking specifically about wheat rather than a gluten free diet.

WHY IS WHEAT SO POPULAR?

It is easy to grow and produces an abundant harvest.

It has a long shelf life and is a very adaptable food.

It is versatile.

The wholegrain can be made into many different types of flour, bran and wheat germ, which, in turn, can be made into many different types of foods.

It has some nutritional advantages being wholesome and fibre rich.

It is convenient

WHY DOES WHEAT CAUSE ADVERSE REACTIONS IN SOME PEOPLE?

1. Whilst whole wheat has been considered a high fibre, nutritious food it is still far from an ideal food because it is a poor source of protein and is not easily tolerated.
2. Wheat and grains are a major source of carbohydrate which can have a soporific effect in its own right. They are digested in the gut to form sugars, which may worsen a hypoglycaemic tendency or feed a yeast overgrowth.
3. Refined wheat (i.e. white flour used to make white bread, biscuits, cake, pasta, etc) is quickly digested and has a high glycaemia index. This means that blood sugar levels will run high after eating wheat, which in the long term causes obesity, diabetes, syndrome X and heart disease. Running a high blood sugar stimulates release of insulin, which is a growth promoter, which is undesirable if you wish to avoid cancer.
4. Wheat bran for some people is directly irritating to the gut and can be a cause of diarrhoea. A study showed 39% of patients irritable bowel symptoms improved after eliminating wheat from their diet (www.drmyhill.co.uk)
5. Wheat contains toxic substances called lectins, which in susceptible individuals can cause haemolysis (destruction of red blood cells) within the blood and muscle pain.
6. Wheat intolerance and wheat allergies are becoming more prevalent, it is estimated that 40% of the population (www.drmyhill.co.uk) now suffer from some form of wheat allergy.
7. Wheat has high levels of phytic acid. This chelates minerals, (prevents absorption of certain minerals including zinc) and puts the body at risk of mineral deficiency syndromes (such as anaemia and osteoporosis)
8. Wheat protein, gluten, is a tough molecule and readily passes from the gut into the bloodstream without having been properly digested. It is this protein which is the main source of the problems people experience with wheat if they have a compromised digestive system. This sticky glue-like substance is difficult to digest and can cause all sorts of problems. It forms a sticky mass, which lines the stomach wall hindering absorption in and out of the stomach. It encourages the growth of unfriendly bacteria in the gut, which, in turn, create toxic substances, and gas, which lead to the symptoms we have already mentioned. Unfortunately, in some individuals gluten causes an antibody response which can lead to autoimmunity illnesses such as such as under active thyroid, pernicious anaemia, Addison's disease and so on. Gluten contains endogenous opiates; this means that it has morphine like qualities and so in susceptible individuals can be addictive. These endogenous opiates are also able to switch off natural killer cell activity, which may reduce resistance to viral infections and cancer. For more information on this I suggest you take a look at www.drmyhill.co.uk or www.wheatanddairyfree.com
9. There is also a theory that when gluten is digested it can upset normal brain chemistry making one lethargic and slow, affecting mental health. There has been some research on wheat and its addictive properties. There has been some research on how wheat affects schizophrenia.

AM I ALLERGIC, INTOLERANT OR JUST EATING TOO MUCH?

True wheat allergy is extremely rare and potentially life threatening. **True wheat allergy in the gut can present as coeliac disease. Undiagnosed coeliac disease is a major risk factor for stomach lymphoma (a cancer)**

However, reactions to wheat seem to be increasingly common. These tend to be the result of a wheat intolerance. An intolerance to wheat will not trigger a life-threatening immunological response but may cause a wide variety of symptoms such as

Fatigue, Bloating, Headaches, Depression, Diarrhoea, Constipation, Lethargy, Indigestion, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Bowel Flora Imbalances, Candida

The affect may be immediate or delayed and may be the result of a single ingestion of wheat or an accumulative ingestion over a number of days, months etc.

There are a large and increasing number of people identifying a link between a wide range of adverse symptoms and wheat.

Many of us eat wheat at every meal without realising or thinking about it. Usually this wheat is poor quality.

Do you eat cereals for breakfast, nibble on cakes and biscuits, have a sandwich at lunch and pasta for dinner?

Reducing your wheat intake and introducing alternative grains into your daily diet will benefit your general health, encourage absorption of nutrients, increase the transit time within the digestive tract, provide a better energy output and encourage a diet less reliant on wheat. It is important to remember that unless you have been identified as having a true wheat or gluten allergy it is not absolutely necessary to avoid all gluten products but remember it is not necessary to eat them either!

LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

- Jacket potato filled with: low-fat cheese/baked beans/tuna/hard boiled eggs/ sweetcorn/salad/chargrilled vegetables/ratatouille etc
- Gluten free bread (Try “Energy-G”, or Terence Stamp Wheat Free Bread or similar which can be bought at Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsbury's or any health food shop or make your own) or rye bread filled with a vegetarian/fish or meat filling. A healthy alternative to mayonnaise/saturated fat dressings and butter is salsa.
- Salad made with variety of vegetables, and either portion fish, eggs, chicken or turkey breast, tuna, poached salmon, mackerel or sardines, marinated tofu, hard-boiled egg, frittata, hummus, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheese, goat's cheese or sheep's cheese, feta cheese, mozzarella, etc. – no dressing other than olive oil and lemon (sparingly). Most supermarkets sell bagged salad and you can also buy tinned or ready-cooked fish and/or meat.
- 4 rice cakes/corn cakes/oatcakes/a slice of rye bread with fish pate/spicy avocado salad/hummus/cottage cheese, goat's cheese/salsa etc accompanied with salad
- Home made non-creamy vegetable based or lentil soup (kept in thermos) with either small serving of cooked new potatoes or wheat free roll (such as “Terence Stamp”) Can be either home-made or fresh (such as “Organix”. There various organic ranges now available at local supermarkets. Please check ingredients as some use wheat as a thickener). To make the soup more “substantial” add cooked rice or another grain. That way you won't miss the “bread” element! Or Miso soup with rice noodles added
- Small pot pro-biotic organic goat or sheep's yoghurt (plain) with two tablespoons of a selection of seeds/nuts such as brazil, almonds, hazelnuts, sesame seeds, linseeds, pumpkin, sunflower seeds.
- Walnut, avocado, baby spinach leaves salad with bacon or tofu or chicken or turkey
- Greek salad
- Cold falafel with salad
- Corn pasta /rice pasta /millet/quinoa salad with pesto dressing, cherry tomatoes and cubed serving of feta cheese
- Home-made potato salad with olive-oil instead of mayonnaise, with diced/chopped spring onions, cabbage, carrots – any raw vegetables that you enjoy

- Vegetarian or “regular” bacon, avocado salad or spicy avocado or avocado and mozzarella
- Brown rice salad/quinoa/buckwheat/millet with diced cucumber, spring onion, sweet pepper, sweet corn and chickpeas. Use a variety of rice for this salad – brown unpolished rice is the healthiest option as it provides fibre and is nutritionally superior to other forms of rice.
- Mixed bean salad with kidney beans, chickpeas, green beans, barlotti beans. Pulses make excellent lunch foods as they provide a good source of protein and offer a balanced energy output. Tinned pulses can be used but please buy organic ranges and ones that are canned in water only. Rinse thoroughly before using in recipes. Some pulses and beans to experiment with: Kidney beans, chick peas, soya beans, broad beans, barlotti, lentils, haricot beans, butter beans, split peas, pot barley, black eyed beans.
- Japanese bento box or sushi box from Waitrose, Sainsbury, Tesco, Asda, Gateway, Somerfield, Boots, Marks & Spencer’s etc
- Chickpea salad with red and green peppers and cherry tomatoes with French dressing or olive oil and lemon

Experiment using buckwheat, millet, corn, oats, rye, barley, sago, tapioca, sweet potato flour, soya flour, chestnut flour. Make your own gluten free breads. They do have a different consistency to wheat bread but if you really need “bread” then this is an option.

Use pulses, (these are easiest tinned at lunchtime for convenience, such as chick peas, kidney beans, broad beans, barlotti, soya beans, lentils, mixed beans.)

Add rice noodles to soups to make a more substantial meal or to salads. They just need to be popped into a bowl of mug of boiling water for a few minutes, they really are very versatile.

Don't forget to eat a wide variety of vegetables – lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, celery, peppers, cabbage, broccoli, squash, pumpkin, parsnip, turnip, swede, carrot, try all the exotic veg and fruit

Use arrowroot or rice flour for thickening sauces or gravies.

Supermarkets are now providing a wide range of wheat free and gluten free products and of course your local health food shop will have a good selection of nuts, seeds and wheat-free flours. Some even sell wheat-free lunch foods.

BENEFITS

It can take at least 4 weeks to notice any changes as a result of removing wheat from your diet, and sometimes up to 6 weeks to see the full benefit.

However, by reducing wheat from lunch time meals there are benefits:

- **Reduction of daily gluten ingested.**
- **More balanced energy. Many people find that just by removing wheat from their “lunch-time” menu they do not suffer from “afternoon” lethargy**
- **As an aid to weight-loss.**
- **Reduction of yeast in the gut thereby reducing flatulence.**
- **There may be a reduction of indigestion**
- **A noticeable reduction of cravings for “quick-fix” sugar foods (i.e. sweets, biscuits, cakes)**
- **It will reduce the likelihood of developing an intolerance to wheat and gluten**
- **Encourage absorption of nutrients**
- **Will encourage an increase in transit time within the digestive tract**
- **Encourage a diet less reliant on wheat.**

If you consider you may have an intolerance or sensitivity to wheat, or any other foods, I recommend you discuss this with a Nutritional Advisor, such as myself or undertake a short, non invasive test using the ASYRA Health screening device to check for any food sensitivities.

Helpful information

Foods free from dairy/wheat/gluten can be obtained from Ultrapharm Ltd., Centenary Business Park, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 1DS, Tel: 01491 578016 for a catalogue and advice on their products.

www.Drmyhill.co.uk

www.wheatanddairyfree.com

www.justineevans.co.uk

Books:

Diet and Nutrition by Rudolph Ballentine

The New Optimum Nutrition Bible – Patrick Holford

Nutrition – Suzanne Le Quesne