Should I or should I not go gluten-free?

May 26, 2011 By Rhonda Peters

Gluten-free foods are on the rise these days, in fact they are just about everywhere, even Wal-Mart! I was happy to see the spike in new products because five years ago when I became gluten free, there was hardly any good products on the market. In fact the few that were available were hard and dry! I think that the increase in gluten-free products has occurred because organizations like the Celiac Disease Foundation (CDF) and the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) have done a great job with educating the masses and pushing governmental policy changes nationwide. So now all of the food manufacturers have taken notice!

What is gluten?
Gluten is made of two protein found in grains such as wheat, rye, and barley and is an important component in baking. Simply put it is the glue-like or sticky texture in baked goods and it is responsible for causing the baked goods to rise.

What does gluten do to the body?
Gluten doesn't impact everyone. However, gluten does impact people diagnosed with Celiac (pronounced as See-lee-ak) Disease (CD), an autoimmune condition that damages the small intestines whenever a person eats anything with gluten. In fact, according to the Celiac Disease Foundation, when people with this disease eat foods that contain gluten, it creates an immune-mediated toxic reaction that causes damage to the small intestine and does not allow food to be properly absorbed. Visit the Celiac Disease Foundation website to find out more about the symptoms of CD.

Should you consider a gluten-free diet?
Yes, you should definitely eat gluten-free if you have Celiac Disease! Also, you should consider a gluten-free diet if you have challenges with Rheumatoid Arthritis, Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn's Disease, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Autism, or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

What foods are gluten-free?
Some examples of gluten-free foods are as follows: brown rice, corn, buckwheat, quinoa, millet, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, tapioca, brown rice flour, cornmeal, sorghum, beans, soy (use caution), poultry, beef, fish, mushrooms, vegetables, etc. There are a lot of foods that are gluten free, but the key thing to remember is that sometimes foods have hidden gluten ingredients, so make sure that you verify before you purchase. Read the labels or ask questions.

Now that you know more, do you need to consider transitioning to a gluten-free diet?
I have been eating gluten-free since 2005, and I have seen major improvements in my arthritis and I have not looked back! If you have more questions, please post a comment!

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