



THE ONLY SUPPLEMENTS YOU NEED TO GET THE BODY YOU WANT.

WHY GLUTEN FREE? A BALANCED LOOK AT THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS



Are you sick of being harassed by gluten-fearing folk for eating the occasional pack of cookies or bowl of pasta?

Or maybe you're just not sure what to believe about gluten and gluten-free dieting. Is gluten a poison like some "experts" claim? Are there any legitimate benefits to eliminating it from your diet?

Your body probably does just fine with gluten and you probably have nothing to gain from a gluten-free diet.

By the end of this article, you'll know more about gluten than the hordes of gluten haters and gluten-free zealots ever will.

You'll know who is harmed by gluten and who isn't and why, and thus who benefits from a gluten-free diet and who doesn't.

You'll have well-reasoned, evidence-based rebuttals to common gluten myths and misinformation.

And, best of all, you'll be able to enjoy your favorite "toxic" glutenous foods with a clear conscience.

WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is a protein formed when two molecules, glutenin and gliadin, come together and form a bond. Gluten gives bread its fantastic chewiness and helps it rise and keep its shape while baking. It's also used as a thickening agent in various foods and is even found in cosmetic products.

Thanks to the global prevalence of wheat, gluten is one of the most heavily consumed proteins on the planet.

Humans have been eating gluten-containing grains for tens of thousands of years but now health pundits everywhere are up in arms about the supposed dangers of the molecule, which include things like:

✓ Weight gain

- ✓ Systemic inflammation
- ✓ Joint pain
- ✓ Autoimmune disease
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Mental foggiess and headaches
- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ And much more

What's the deal? Why is eliminating gluten, a part of a food that has sustained us for millennia, suddenly considered vital to the preservation of our health?

WHAT IS (APPARENTLY) SO BAD ABOUT GLUTEN?

Most of the accusations against gluten revolve around the idea that it irritates and attacks your small intestine and causes undigested food particles to "leak" into your bloodstream. This, in turn, causes an autoimmune response and systemic inflammation, which can cause a whole host of health issues.

Where do these claims originate from, though?

Well, gluten anxiety has been building for many years, but it didn't reach the tipping point until a study was published in 2011 that suggested that it can cause illness in people who don't have celiac disease.

For many people, the gluten story ends here. Gluten is toxic and dangerous and the sooner you drop it from your diet the better.

But the story doesn't end here.

The research team that published the 2011 study that sparked an overnight food scare continued their gluten research and published another paper in 2013 that shed more light on the subject.

The study was conducted with 37 people who believed they had non-celiac gluten sensitivity and found that most of them had no reaction to pure gluten when they didn't know they were eating it.

What, then, were they experiencing in their day-to-day lives that lead them to believe they're gluten intolerant?

Well, while reducing gluten intake per se didn't improve subjects' GI issues, reducing the amount of carbohydrates known as FODMAPs in their diets did.

FODMAP stands for "Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides And Polyols," which is a bunch of fancy talk for a short chain carbohydrate that is poorly absorbed in the small intestine. Examples of foods that contain FODMAPs are grains like wheat, barley, and rye, beans, dairy, and quite a few fruits and vegetables.

The problem with FODMAPs is when these molecules pass into the large intestine, bacteria ferment them. This can cause gas, bloating, and discomfort.

Thus, it's no surprise that research has found that what people think is a gluten sensitivity is actually a FODMAP sensitivity. It also explains why going gluten-free can help reduce people's celiac-like symptoms (as it eliminates wheat, the real problem).

So, the conclusion of the 2013 study wasn't that gluten sensitivity doesn't exist but that there's no evidence that gluten triggers gut symptoms once dietary FODMAPs are reduced. In simple terms, people that think they're gluten sensitive probably have no issues with gluten and instead have trouble processing certain types of FODMAPs.

This also means that just going gluten-free isn't enough to fully address the problem. It can help due to the elimination of high-FODMAP grains but it leaves in many other commonly eaten foods that can be equally problematic.

We can see this in the literature as well. Studies show that people will follow a gluten-free diet even though it doesn't fully resolve their symptoms, because it makes them "feel good."

WHO NEEDS TO AVOID GLUTEN (AND WHY THIS PROBABLY DOESN'T INCLUDE YOU)

As I mentioned earlier, gluten is comprised of the two proteins glutenin and gliadin.

Gliadin is the tough guy of the pair. It's a densely packed protein that is particularly difficult to digest and when it's absorbed the small intestine, it can trigger an autoimmune response in some people.

This response manifests in various ways, including bloating, flatulence, diarrhea, headache, muscle pains, fatigue, mental "fogginess," and more.

This condition is known as celiac disease and people with this disorder must completely eliminate gluten from their diets.

Celiac disease is rare—research estimates that between 0.3 and 1.2% of people have it—but it can be extremely serious if left undiagnosed and untreated.

You see, the autoimmune response flattens the tiny, finger-like projects in the small intestine that absorb nutrients from food you eat (known as villi). This damage reduces nutrient absorption and can persist for many years after gluten is eliminated from the diet. The result is chronic gut inflammation and micronutrient deficiencies that can increase the risk of disease and even death.

Celiac disease starts as an intolerance but, if gluten intake isn't curbed, progresses into a full-blown affliction. The good news is you probably don't have celiac disease.

The bad news is roughly 80% of celiac cases go undiagnosed and the average time to diagnosis is 11 years.

So if you notice any symptoms when you eat gluten-containing foods or have any other reason to suspect something is awry, you should see your doctor and get tested for celiac disease.

If you do and the test comes back negative, you can breathe a sigh of relief and look into other possibilities:

✓ Your body doesn't deal with FODMAPs well.

If this is the case, adopting a low-FODMAP diet is easy to do and should dramatically improve symptoms.

✓ You have irritable bowel syndrome.

IBS symptoms overlap considerably with those of non-celiac gluten sensitivity.

✓ You have a wheat allergy.

Research shows that wheat contains certain types of poorly digested proteins that can trigger an immune response in the body. People with wheat allergies often mistake their symptoms for gluten intolerance and turn to the unnecessarily restrictive gluten-free diet as a solution.

Like celiac disease, however, wheat allergies are very rare and can be verified through medical testing.

✔ You have a gluten sensitivity.

If your symptoms don't stem from a FODMAP sensitivity, IBS, or wheat allergy, it's possible that you do in fact have a gluten sensitivity. It's just unlikely.

THE BIGGEST MYTHS ABOUT THE GLUTEN-FREE DIET

If you're "g-free" or considering it, you probably want to improve your health or lose weight, or both. Unfortunately a gluten-free diet guarantees neither, and in fact, may even have the opposite effects.

Here's why.

A gluten-free diet isn't good for losing weight.

The easiest way to sell the masses on a strange new diet fad is to convince them they will lose weight with it.

First, no individual foods can directly cause or prevent weight gain.

Certain foods are more conducive to weight loss than others due mainly to factors like satiety and energy density, but weight loss is more about how much you eat than what. Thus, diets that promote a lower caloric intake are conducive to weight loss and lower body weights. Those that promote a higher intake are conducive to weight gain and higher body weights.

Ironically, as a gluten-free diet tends to be low in fiber, and as fiber induces satiety (fullness), it tends to fall into the latter category, not the former.

The point here isn't that a gluten-free diet "causes weight gain," but that in some people it tends to promote overeating that causes weight gain.

A gluten-free diet isn't inherently healthy.

Many people adopt a gluten-free diet because they've been led to believe it's just a healthy way to eat. The reality is gluten-free dieting offers no special health benefits.

In fact, research shows that many gluten-free varieties of foods are less nutritious than their gluten-containing counterparts. Gluten-free foods also tend to contain more carbohydrate and fat and less protein and fiber, which makes it easier to overeat.

This is part of the reason why people with celiac disease following a gluten-free diet must compensate for micronutrient deficiencies caused by their diet.

A gluten-free diet also robs you of the potential health benefits of wheat and gluten, which include:

- ✓ Supporting beneficial bacteria in the gut, which can reduce the risk of various disease and inflammatory conditions.
- ✓ Lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels and lower levels of systemic inflammation.
- ✓ Improved immunity.

SHOULD WE ALL JUST EAT ALL THE GLUTEN WE WANT, THEN?

By now you've probably concluded that if eating gluten doesn't cause you any issues, there's no reason to follow a gluten-free diet. And you're right.

That said, it may still be a good idea to not use your newfound knowledge to eat as many gluten-containing foods as you possibly can.

There is research that suggests that high-gluten diets can cause harm to intestinal cells in non-celiac people. This may be due to genetic predispositions or other not-yet-understood mechanisms, but scientists just don't know yet.

There's also research that indicates that high-gluten diets may cause dysfunction in the "gates" of the small intestine that block or allow molecules into the blood. Studies show that this type of "gate malfunction" may be linked to the development of autoimmune disorders.

Again, these points are more hypothetical than concrete, but I'd rather "play it safe" than, ten years from now, face possible health consequences of high-gluten dieting. So while I'm not fully gluten-free, I try to limit my consumption to an average of a serving or two of gluten-containing foods per day.

Real science. Real supplements. Real results.
Get the results you want when you shop our line of bodybuilding,
pre-workout and weight loss stacks and supplements.

[Shop Supplements Here](#)

YOU SHOULD BE GETTING MORE FOR YOUR SUPPLEMENT MONEY.