

NUTRITION NUGGET # 19
Should I be eating a gluten-free diet?



Answer: If you are diagnosed with celiac disease, your doctor may tell you to eliminate foods and products containing gluten. If you do not have this condition, it is not necessary to eat gluten-free foods.

Facts:

- Those diagnosed with celiac disease have an immune response in the intestines due to a protein called gluten.
- Some people may be allergic or sensitive to gluten, feeling digestive distress or fatigue after eating gluten in foods.
- More serious consequences occur for people with celiac disease; intestinal tract damage and malnutrition if they eat foods with gluten. The only treatment is to avoid all foods and products with gluten.
- Gluten acts as a glue to helps breads maintain their shape. Gluten is found in wheat—durum, emmer, spelt, farina, farro, KAMUT® khorasan wheat, einkorn, rye, barley, and triticale.
- There is little or no evidence to suggest that eliminating gluten will improve other conditions. Eliminating gluten also means cutting out grains with B vitamins, iron, and fiber.
- Evidence shows that eating more whole grains can actually reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some forms of cancer.
- **Gluten-free grains and foods without gluten include: amaranth, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats, quinoa, rice, sorghum, teff, wild rice, potato, cassava, and beans.**

Apply: A participant says she has heard that gluten-free diets are healthy and wants to try it. What do you tell her?

References: <http://celiac.org/celiac-disease/what-is-celiac-disease/>; <http://celiac.org/live-gluten-free/gluten-free-diet/what-is-gluten/>; <http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthy-kitchen-11/truth-about-gluten/>; <http://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/gluten-free-whole-grains>. Image: http://img4-1.realsimple.timeinc.net/images/daily-finds/food/0412/bisquick-gluten-free_300.jpg; http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-s4TZln8TXv4/TmV7jGsAmal/AAAAAAAAAArg/qAHVmK4zYqM/s1600/chex_gluten-free_cereals_1.jpg. Accessed on: 07/01/2014.