



WHOLISTIC MEDICINE
Specialists of Atlanta

Does gluten **REALLY** matter?



Our simple 3 step process to help you discover if gluten could be a problem for you!



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CHAPTER ONE

Why does gluten even matter?





Gluten

Controversy

It seems like no protein is more controversial than gluten. Gluten is the protein in certain grains and often finds its way into every meal of the day. Gluten is found in wheat, rye, barley, malt, oats and spelt. Gluten is what makes bread soft and chewy. Even more specifically, there are two main proteins in gluten: gliadins and glutenins. One particular gliadin, found in wheat, is what leads to celiac disease and gluten sensitivity.

Let's look at common foods and meals that contain gluten:

- Breakfast: oatmeal, bagels, cereal, waffles and/or toast
- Lunch: sandwich, pasta and/or soup
- Dinner: pasta, pizza and/or bread
- Dessert: cookies, cake and/or pie
- Snacks: crackers, pretzels, pastries



Gluten Controversy

After repeated exposure (every meal, or most every meal, for years and years), and stress in general (which we all have), many people (many more than are actually diagnosed) start reacting to gluten. For some people the reaction begins at an early age (less than 1 years of age in some cases). For others, it may be later in life. I see patients of all ages and help them discover if they have a gluten sensitivity. And although I have a biased patient population toward illness, my experience is roughly 7 out of 10 people I evaluate have a gluten sensitivity.

If we can answer the question, “what role does food have in your chronic health problems?”, we can make great strides in drug-free measures to alleviate symptoms and restore great health and function again. This should be the 1st question every doctor asks him/herself in the examination room. ***Fortunately, it is a question every properly trained, licensed, and credentialed Naturopathic doctor DOES ask.***



Gluten Controversy

You see, once the immune system starts reacting to gluten, a number of symptoms can result anywhere in the body, causing chronic inflammation and subsequent health issues. Different patients can have different reactions to gluten. How is that? It seems to be related to genetic and personal medical history. This means if everyone in your family has a weak stomach, gluten sensitivity will likely rear its head in YOUR stomach. Or if you've had chronic trauma/inflammation in your gut, or abused drugs like NSAIDs or steroidal medications, gluten sensitivity will very likely show itself in your gut. Others with a family or personal history of depression will be vulnerable to a food sensitivity such as gluten causing clinical depression when they are regularly consuming gluten containing foods AND they have a personal sensitivity to this food protein.

Bottom line: gluten affects those of us with a sensitivity wherever we are weakest or most vulnerable and explains why different people manifest different symptoms to the same food.



Gluten Controversy

I get it. **I am Italian, after all!** At first, it can be hard to imagine that the foods we love, like bread and pizza, might actually be causing our health problems. It is as if we think we will have nothing to eat if not for gluten. And for good reason. It is in most everything that is commonly served and sold in stores and restaurants.

In reality, it is BECAUSE most all of our foods contain gluten that so many of us (myself included) have become sensitive to it. The wonderful news is that there ARE many foods available that do NOT contain gluten. It takes a bit of a shift in thinking about what to eat, but there is no doubt in my mind that we can live without gluten. Actually, at this point, we can't live with it.



CHAPTER TWO

Keeping our Glu's Straight





Glu's

Since the “glu-” in gluten is just a latin root that means “sticky,” some people get a bit confused about which glu- things contain gluten and which don't. Here are some examples:

- **Glutenous Rice:** Just like all rice, this rice does not contain gluten. The name just means “sticky rice.” Although occasionally, Asian restaurants may add ingredients containing gluten to make the rice itself more ‘sticky’!
- **Glutamate:** As in monosodium-glutamate (MSG). Glutamate also does not contain gluten. Its name comes from the fact that it comes from glutamic acid.
- **Glutamic Acid:** One of the basic amino acids used to form proteins. Found in just about every food with protein. Does not contain gluten. Gets its name from the fact that it was discovered when someone poured sulfuric acid on gluten back in the 1800s.
- **Glutamine:** Another basic amino acid. Glutamine is made from glutamate by your muscles. It's also found in just about every food with protein. Does not contain gluten.

While awareness of the role of foods in our health or lack thereof is growing seemingly everyday, there are still many people suffering from chronic, lingering, pesky symptoms that could be resolved by a simple 3 step process to answer this question on an individual level (ie, for YOU!).



GLU'S

Sometimes it can be very confusing whether or not you have a gluten sensitivity for the following reasons:

Not everyone experiences the same symptoms in the same parts of the body.

The symptoms of gluten sensitivity can show up basically anywhere in the body depending on your personal and/or genetic susceptibility.

Symptoms typically do not come on immediately after eating gluten.

It could take days, or even a week, for the symptoms to occur, by which point you've likely eaten several (if not many) servings of gluten as well as other kinds of food and so wouldn't be able to tell that gluten was the cause.

You can actually crave gluten (and other food sensitivities).

This means that once you eat it, you are likely to crave more, and are therefore not so apt to give it up easily. And it is a vicious cycle...the more you eat, the more sensitive you may become.

A unified, standard test, agreed on by all the medical powers that be...does not exist.

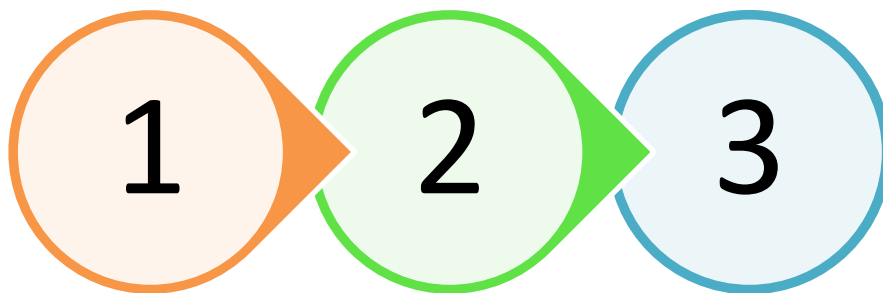
Researchers, including gastroenterologists, only recently agreed on a name for gluten sensitivity and cannot agree on a standard test for diagnosing it. It is not diagnosed with the same tests that are used to diagnose Celiac disease. The term now used is "non-celiac gluten sensitivity".

To choose to avoid gluten requires diligence because it is used in so many common foods and meals, and exposure is highly likely unless you are on the look-out for it. It is only with a serious commitment of health improvement that most people even consider starting down the path of eating gluten-free. But how can you know if it's worth all the bother ***for YOU?***



CHAPTER THREE

Our Simple 3-Step Process





Step 1

Do you experience these symptoms?

Having three or more of the symptoms and health issues listed below indicates that you may have gluten sensitivity. Even if you have one of these health issues, it would be worth considering gluten as an underlying cause. Of course not everyone with these symptoms is sensitive to gluten, but if your symptoms continue despite what you've tried, going gluten-free is one possible solution.

Some patients with gluten sensitivity experience **digestive symptoms**, such as:

- Reflux
- Bloating
- Gas
- IBS
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Stomach pain



Step 1

Or these symptoms?

Other patients only experience symptoms in other areas of their body, such as:

Frequent infections in any location

- Pain such as headaches, migraines, joint pain, muscle aches, fibromyalgia
- Neurological symptoms like dizziness, tingling, numbness, and weakness.
- Mental/emotional symptoms such as brain fog, decreased memory, lack of focus, anxiety, depression, PMS, mood changes, and sleep issues.
- Skin rashes such as hives, eczema, acne, rosacea, dandruff, warts, and psoriasis.
- Autoimmunity such as Hashimoto's, lupus, M.S., rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's, and others.

Other common health issues association with gluten sensitivity include:

- Fatigue**
- Weight gain or difficulty losing weight**
- Hair loss
- Nutrient deficiencies (iron, vitamin D, B vitamins, and others)
- Fertility issues
- Thyroid issues

Keep in mind that gluten sensitivity, and the subsequent inflammation, can lead to other food sensitivities, so it is quite likely that if you are reacting to gluten, you are probably reacting to other foods too. And you may only feel significantly better if you eliminate all the foods that are triggering a response. [***The best way to determine all your food sensitivities is with special testing with a specialized lab.***](#)



Step 2

Do an IgG food sensitivity panel!

Gluten sensitivity can show as IgG antibody responses to gluten, and gluten-containing grains. It may also show as anti-gliadin antibodies, but that is usually best relied on as a measure of actual celiac disease. You can get your antibodies checked in a simple blood test – done either by blood draw or with a finger poke. There are even ways that you can order this type of test online if you [click here](#).

I suggest checking for food sensitivities to other foods as well, because with gluten sensitivity, and the symptoms mentioned above, it is quite likely that you may also be reacting to such foods as dairy products, eggs, beans, and other grains. In over 17 years of testing patients for food sensitivities, **I have NEVER seen a patient who ONLY has a gluten sensitivity!** There are always others, but as far as clinical consequences, gluten is the #1 'usual suspect'.

** Note that gluten sensitivity will NOT show with an intestinal biopsy. That is considered to be the standard way to diagnose Celiac disease, but does not show gluten sensitivity.*



Step 3

Conduct a short, clinical trial On YOURSELF!

You can either do a food/gluten sensitivity test, or you can try avoiding gluten for at least 6-8 weeks to see how you feel. I say “at least” because for some people it can take as long as six months to feel a difference. During this time of elimination, take note (and even journal) about how you feel.

Then, after avoiding gluten for this period of time, have a serving of food containing gluten (or the way you would normally be eating gluten on a typical day) and notice how you feel over the following two to three days. **Remember, this is an IgG, type III, delayed hypersensitivity reaction so the response may not be immediately following the test meal per se, but may arise in a delayed fashion.** After 2-3 days, if you are unsure of any reactivity, repeat the test with another trial of gluten and wait another 2 or so days.

Do symptoms that had disappeared reappear? Do other symptoms occur? If you have symptoms upon reintroducing gluten, that is considered to be a positive gluten sensitivity. After all, listening to your OWN body’s response to food is ultimately the best way to know what to eat and not eat.



CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion





What's Next?

Discovering that you have a gluten sensitivity could change your life – for the better! It could mean losing the weight you've been trying to lose, increasing your energy, getting rid of pain and other un-resolving symptoms, and simply moving forward with your goals, whether that is pregnancy, a project that requires focus, or simply enjoying life without infections and a need for medications. That seems worth figuring out to me.

If you'd like to know whether you have gluten sensitivity that could be underlying many of your chronic medical complaints, the next step is to evaluate your diet and immune system with a simple blood test to ensure that you do not have a gluten sensitivity. In this way, we can completely personalize your diet and your health so that you don't have to wonder anymore if food is the cause of your symptoms and ills and you can begin the process of enjoying life and good health again. I'd be happy to help you with that...in fact, it's my mission, just [click here to make an appointment!](#)



CHAPTER FIVE

Resources





Gluten-related Resources

For additional gluten-related resources, check these out:

- [Non-celiac gluten sensitivity](#)
- [Grain Brain](#)
- [Wheat Belly](#)
- [Basic diet guide for gluten-free diet](#)



Wholistic Medicine Specialists of Atlanta

1055A Powers Place
Alpharetta, GA 30009

678-987-8451

www.wmsoa.com

Author:

Dr. Bradley Bongiovanni

“The food you eat can either be the
safest and most powerful form of
medicine, or the slowest form of
poison.”



- Ann Wigmore

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