

GLUTEN

More and more groceries and health food stores are stocked with gluten-free products. That's good news for people with celiac disease, who for health reasons should not eat wheat with gluten.

Most of the people who don't have celiac disease and or even a sensitivity to wheat/gluten, reach for gluten-free products. Many people perceive that a gluten-free diet is healthier.

In fact, it isn't. For people with coeliac disease, a gluten-free diet is ESSENTIAL.

But for the rest, a gluten-free diet can lack vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

COELIAC DISEASE SERIOUS, OFTEN UNDETECTED:

Coeliac known as 'Gluten Induced Enteropathy' is a condition caused by an abnormal immune response to gluten which can damage the lining of the small intestine. This prevents vital nutrients from being absorbed.

Symptoms of coeliac disease include diarrhoea, anaemia, bone pain, and a severe skin rash called dermatitis herpetiformis.

Some people may be sensitive to gluten but don't have outright coeliac disease. These people may feel better on a diet with less gluten.

Going gluten-free means saying no to many common and nutritious foods. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye.

Gluten itself doesn't offer special nutritional benefits.

But the many whole grains that contain gluten do. They're rich in an array of vitamins and minerals, such as B complex vitamins and iron, as well as fibre. Studies show that whole grain foods, as part of a healthy diet, may help lower risk of heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer.

THE RISKS OF GOING GLUTEN-FREE:

Because wheat is ubiquitous in our diet, completely eliminating gluten requires adopting a whole new diet. Yes, you should and must avoid the processed foods containing gluten, like pasta, noodles, sugar containing breakfast cereals, pizza and white bread. However, eliminating whole categories of food you've been used to eating, can pose a risk of nutritional deficiencies.

Gluten-free products tend to be low in a wide range of important nutrients, including B vitamins, calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, and fibre.

People with coeliac disease must choose wisely on a Gluten-Free Diet.

Not all the foods being marketed as “Gluten-free” are healthy.

Some are high in saturated fat or cholesterol. Others may be high in calories but contain very little nutrition.

Lean meats and fish, fruits and vegetables, and low-fat organic dairy products are all safe for people with coeliac disease. Grains that don't contain gluten, such as quinoa and amaranth, are another healthy option.

Unless, you have a coeliac disease, you need not avoid gluten.