

GLUTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Date _____

Do any of the following apply to you?

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weight gain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unexplained fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Difficulty relaxing, feel tense frequently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unexplained digestive problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female hormone imbalances, (PMS, menopausal symptoms) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Muscle or joint pain or stiffness of unknown cause |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Migraine like headaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Food allergies/sensitivities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Difficulty digesting dairy products |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tendency to over consume alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Overly sensitive to physical and emotional pain, cry easily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cravings for sweets, bread, carbohydrates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tendency to overeat sweets, bread, carbohydrates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Abdominal pain or cramping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Abdominal bloating or distention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intestinal gas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | "Love" specific foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eat when upset, eat to relax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Constipation or diarrhea of no known cause |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unexplained skin problems/rashes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Difficulty gaining weight |

Have you suffered from any of the following conditions?

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Allergies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Depression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anorexia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bulimia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rosacea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diabetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Osteoporosis/bone loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Iron deficiency/anemia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chronic fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Irritable bowel syndrome |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Crohn's disease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ulcerative colitis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Candida |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hypoglycemia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lactose intolerance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alcoholism |

"Yes" Responses Gluten Intolerance Potential

4 or less	Not likely
9 or more	Very likely

A Brief Explanation of Gluten Intolerance

Gluten intolerance is an autoimmune process, not a food allergy. It is most common among Irish, English, Scottish, Scandinavian, and Eastern European people. The most common symptoms include, but are not limited to: **weight gain, fatigue** and **depression**.

A person with gluten intolerance cannot digest the protein portion of many commonly eaten grains. This protein is resistant to normal digestive enzymes, and instead combines with the intestinal enzyme "transglutaminase" to form an immune complex that deposits on the intestinal lining. The body recognizes this complex as a foreign substance and begins an immune reaction to it. Immune cells come into the area and release a series of toxins to try to "kill" this unidentified immune complex, causing inflammation in the digestive system and microscopic damage to the intestinal lining tissue. This is what causes the unexplained digestive symptoms like bloating, diarrhea, constipation, gas, and cramping. This immune reaction also spreads into the bloodstream and is responsible for feelings of fatigue and malaise after a meal containing these foods.

The walls of the digestive tract are lined with immune cells that form a protective barrier of immune molecules called Secretory IgA. This lining protects against infectious agents such as bacteria, parasites, and fungus that can arrive with the food. If a person with gluten intolerance continues to eat the gluten, in time the constant inflammation and irritation in the digestive tract uses up this Secretory IgA and wears out the immune cells that produce it. This depletion of immune cells makes a person more susceptible to infectious agents that otherwise would not be able to cause trouble. The inflammation also begins to damage the small intestine lining, reducing its ability to process and absorb nutrients from the food. You quite literally are what you eat and absorb; if your body can't absorb your food properly, you will suffer many symptoms.

The number one symptom associated with malabsorption resulting from gluten intolerance is a combination of fatigue and weight gain. Without properly processing your food, you lose many of the nutrients from the food you eat. (Putting it into your mouth doesn't guarantee that your body will get it!) Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can develop, leaving you constantly hungry and tired. Muscle cramping is more likely, because the lack of magnesium impairs muscle relaxation and has also been linked to cardiovascular disease. An inability to absorb calcium makes osteoporosis more likely. Mineral deficiencies can create restlessness and inability to relax, and can also cause difficulty sleeping. B vitamin deficiencies interfere with energy production and cause weakness, fatigue, and malaise. Without absorbing fats (the good kind), your body cannot control inflammation (associated with most chronic diseases). Also, since most hormones are made from cholesterol, you can also develop hormone imbalances. This includes reduction of your body's ability to make stress hormones like cortisol, interfering with your ability to handle stress and maintain a balanced emotional state (since these hormones also interact with the brain's emotional centers). Hormones help regulate insulin and blood sugar and your ability to process fat and carbohydrates, contributing to unwanted weight gain if they are unbalanced. These effects on your metabolism can eventually lead to diabetes.

There is also a phenomenon that causes people to crave things that they are allergic to. Some of these reactions seem to produce “morphine-like” molecules in the body. The exact mechanism is not yet fully understood, but this is why many people crave carbohydrates or become “addicted” to them much the way an alcoholic or drug addict becomes addicted to alcohol.

There are cells lining the intestinal tract that create enzymes to digest food. These cells too are damaged in this process. If the body cannot secrete the enzyme lactase, then lactose (milk sugar) can no longer be digested and becomes intolerant to dairy products. The digestive tract can also lose much of its ability to digest protein – which can lead to a deficiency in amino acids, the building blocks for many vital molecules such as neurotransmitters (brain signaling chemicals), one of which is Serotonin. Low levels of Serotonin are associated with depression and insomnia.

Eventually the digestive tract develops microscopic gaps in areas of constant inflammation. This condition is referred to as “leaky gut syndrome”. When this occurs, undigested food particles, parasites, bacteria, viruses, fungi and other invaders can pass through the intestinal lining and enter the blood stream, where the immune system attacks them. This increases the body’s susceptibility to illnesses, and is also the cause of many food allergies that would be well-tolerated by an intact intestinal wall. Food is meant to be fully digested, broken down and filtered through the liver before it ever enters the blood stream. When undigested food particles are allowed to slip through the gaps into the blood stream, the body’s immune system sees them as foreign invaders and creates immune cells to defend against them. Then the next time you eat these other foods, the body remembers them as a potentially threatening invader and creates a reaction against them, resulting in a food allergy that you wouldn’t have with an intact gut lining.

How to Take Further Action

The above reactions are possible over time in someone who is gluten intolerant, but there a wide range of sensitivity, depending on many genetic and environmental factors. Not all people will react in an extreme way, but if you do have intolerance to gluten, it is very important that you identify it and avoid all products containing gluten.

If you scored 5 or higher on the questionnaire, I recommend you eliminate all gluten-containing foods from your diet for a minimum of two months. At the end of the two months (if you have been strictly compliant during this time), you should notice significant relief (if not elimination) of these symptoms if you are in fact gluten intolerant. If you are confirmed to be gluten intolerant you will need to remain gluten-free for the rest of your life to avoid the recurrence of these unwanted and harmful effects of gluten.

Gluten-free means avoiding all foods containing gluten, including wheat, rye, spelt, bulgar, semolina, couscous, triticale, and durum flour. Gluten can be hidden, so read labels carefully! Beware of modified food starch, dextrin, flavorings and extracts, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, imitation seafood, and creamed or thickened products such as soups, stews, and sauces, which typically contain gluten products. Please refer to one of the many books on gluten (such as *Your Guide to Healthy Hormones* by Dan Kalish), for a more detailed discussion on gluten intolerance.