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## Bread - Staff of Life, or Slice of Illness? (Part 3)

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*"Anyhow, the hole in the doughnut is at least digestible."*

~H.L. Mencken

The above quote was uttered well before the invention of donut holes by an enterprising company. Today, those manufactured donut holes may be the only thing between you and the experience of vibrant health and energy. In the last two articles, I explained how wheat and other gluten sources are associated with autoimmune disease, whether or not there are gastrointestinal symptoms. Yes, a large dietary change can feel disruptive and challenging in a busy world. The seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome, though. This segment of the series is devoted to tips on how to begin a 3 month gluten-free elimination diet. I would like to focus on ways to implement this in our fast-paced world without experiencing an overriding sense of deprivation and loss.

### Seven Tips for Success

1) On Your Mark . . . Record your current symptoms (if any), areas of inflammation, aches, pains, and abnormal blood test results in a small notebook. Note the date, your weight, energy level, and the length of time you will commit to being gluten-free. Pick a target date to begin a completely gluten-free life, and mark that down. Record any changes, and plan to reinvestigate the abnormal test findings in about 3 months.

2) Get Set . . . Start purchasing and stocking up on gluten-free substitutes for foods and snacks you enjoy. For example, if you feel a cookie at the end of the day is an indulgence you wouldn't want to live without, search for gluten-free cookies, recipes or mixes that you really like. An easy way to find products is to inquire at your favorite grocery store(s), either online or at the customer service desk. Many companies publish a gluten-free list, and with that in hand you can shop aisle-by-aisle for tasty substitutes for your favorite foods.

3) Go ! - Survey the kitchen and pantry. If you live with others, conflicts are likely to arise if you throw out the family's favorite crackers, cereal and bread, so for now it may be less challenging to dedicate a large plastic box for your items. If you live alone or with others who support your efforts by going gluten-free themselves, there is more control over the food environment. Pack, give away or discard all the items you have that contain wheat, rye, barley, oats, soy sauce, malt and other sources of gluten. Remember to research your toothpaste, mouthwash, lipstick, chapstick, moisturizer and medication. (Note - the list of gluten-containing products is too lengthy to publish. See the internet sites listed or inquire with our office.)

4) Eating Out - Ask your favorite restaurants, pizzerias, snack shops and food outlets for a gluten-free menu. If one is not available, tell the server directly and clearly that you are allergic to gluten, wheat, barley, rye, and oats. It may be prudent to spell it out further (no pasta, flour, soy sauce, bread crumbs, or bread). A server can easily consult with the kitchen, and minor substitutes (such as different sauces, sauteeing with rice flour vs. wheat flour) can be made with a minimum of fuss.

5) Satisfying Cravings - As a mother who has found it necessary to implement a gluten-free household, I've found that thinking ahead is paramount. You are probably familiar with the cravings and taste preferences of your loved ones. Indulge those cravings while transitioning them slowly to an overall healthier diet (less refined carbohydrates, for example). This seems to ease the dependence on gluten. For example, find a tasty gluten-free cinnamon bread for a child who loves his cinnamon bread. Later on you can transition from starchy foods to healthier alternatives. For school-age children, social situations (team snacks, parties, holidays and special occasions) require the foresight usually needed - plus some. For adults, the strategy is similar; try to satisfy cravings. I have found in my practice that weight gain does not necessarily occur with this approach. Luckily for the sake of decadence, there are artisan gluten-free bakeries and foods emerging at an accelerated pace. I predict that it won't be long before every food vendor provides delicious gluten-free items on their menus.

6) Eating on-the-Go - Every time you "slip" and eat gluten, you may re-initiate an inflammatory process in the body, a discouraging possibility. But persistence will pay off and eventually a solid gluten-free pattern will emerge. The trick may be as simple as not allowing hunger to overcome your sense of judgment in the moment. Keep snacks handy at all times. Some examples of healthy snacks:

- Small handful of almonds with unsweetened blueberries or other dried fruit
- A gluten-free snack bar (Try "Oskri" from Open Sesame in Lafayette, "Think Thin" from Trader Joe's, "Nugo Free" from Whole Foods, or "Mrs. Mays" from Costco)

- 1/4 to 1/2 cup hummus with carrots and snap peas
- 1 oz. dark chocolate with nuts (Let it dissolve in your mouth - yum).

7) Help Others - At Lamorinda Nutrition we are developing a local gluten-free restaurant, bakery and snack shop list for the Lamorinda area. If you own or know of a business that you'd like to have included on the list, please send an email, and provide details. I will compile a list of resources. This support of local businesses will help accelerate healthier gluten-free living in our community.

George Bernard Shaw once said, "There is no love sincerer than the love of food." If you're thinking that it's time to start loving food that loves you back, you're on your way to a healthier life. You can go gluten-free and also satisfy your appetite.



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#### For Further Information

If you read my November '09 article on "Making Changes"\* , you may recall that there are six stages of change. During the "Contemplation" stage, researching the issue may satisfy your curiosity or concerns about the gluten issue, so here are some reliable internet resources:

- [www.Pubmed.com](http://www.Pubmed.com) (stands for "Public Medical Information" -

This is the government's listing of all research. It is extensive and brimming with medical terminology. For those with a penchant for science, Pubmed is a gold mine. Take note - It will be time-consuming to decipher just the abstracts alone.

- [www.Celiac.com](http://www.Celiac.com) - This is a large site, containing 1,000's of entries and an online store.

• [www.Glutensyndrome.net](http://www.Glutensyndrome.net) - Comprehensive info on gluten sensitivity and its impact on health and lifestyle.

- [www.NFCA.org](http://www.NFCA.org) - This site is dedicated to educating the scientific community about the extra-intestinal manifestations of celiac disease.

• There are also many gluten-free recipe sources online. Some will email you a daily dinner idea, and many have online stores and blogs. One website providing a combination of educational and culinary info is [www.thedr.com](http://www.thedr.com) (See recipes).

The following recipes will be available on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com/html/recipes.html](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/html/recipes.html)

Enjoy a Gluten-free Dinner!  
- Superb Minestrone

- Luscious Green Salad
- Rosemary Dinner Rolls
- Chocolate Mint Soft-Center Cupcakes

\* [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) - 11/11/09; p.8-9 "[Ch, Ch, Ch, Changes](#)"; Theresa Tsingis, DCMS

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