

# Health Benefits of Gluten Free Diets

By **Elena Newell**

A gluten free diet is not only beneficial to people suffering from celiac disease it can also benefit many people who are suffering from brain fog, joint pains, auto-immune and neurological disorders. However, people suffering from celiac disease benefit the most because the disease is caused by a severe sensitivity to gluten. As per the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Program one person out of every 133 adults in the US suffers from celiac disease.

A gluten free diet involves avoiding all foods that have wheat, rye, oats, barley and spelt. Those individuals who are very sensitive to gluten and also those who will benefit from a gluten free diet must avoid pasta, most grains, bread, beer, cereals as well as processed foods that contain gluten. Fortunately however gluten free pasta, bread, beer and other products are easily available these days. Gluten sensitivity can be genetic as well as due to infections and a malfunctioning liver. Another heartening fact is that vegetables and fresh fruits are gluten free.

According to recently published medical literature, research has shown that people who can benefit from a gluten free diet are those suffering from multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, autism, locomotor ataxia (the loss of balance), Down's syndrome, osteoporosis, seizures, anemia, peripheral neuropathies, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, etc. Some other conditions that are associated with consumption of gluten are diarrhea, failure to put on weight, distention of abdomen, etc. Therefore these people are sure to benefit from a gluten free diet.

Many other conditions that may be less commonly caused by gluten sensitivity are delayed puberty, short stature, frequent abdominal pains, infertility, depression, anxiety, multiple abortions, thyroid disease, dermatitis, Sjogren's syndrome, etc. If the root cause is gluten sensitivity in these cases they will greatly benefit from a gluten free diet. Others who suffer from manganese, chlorophyll and zinc deficiencies caused by gluten sensitivity can also benefit from a gluten free diet.

Gluten is the combination of proteins that are derived from plant sources and is present in wheat as well as barley and oat products. It is the sticky thing that makes the flour made from these products sticky and provides firmness to breads and cakes. People who

are not gluten sensitive are able to digest gluten easily by using the hair like small projections in their small intestine known as villi. In people who have celiac disease or other gluten sensitivity problems, the consumption of gluten triggers an immune reaction that flattens the villi and a number of symptoms make their appearance.

However this inability to eat gluten containing diet can be easily turned into an advantage by taking gluten free diet consisting of meat, potatoes, rice, corn snacks, cheese, fruits, vegetables, soups, etc. Wheat flour can be easily substituted by rice flour and corn meal can also be used beneficially. As you may have noticed, many of the constituents of a gluten free diet also constitute healthy food and are beneficial for people who are not required to take a gluten free diet out of compulsion.