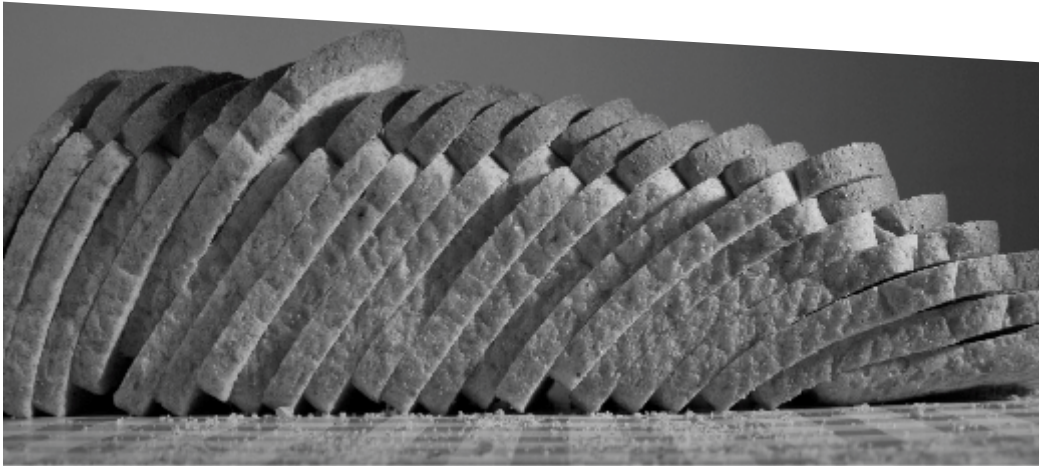




Gluten Intolerance

Gluten allergies and gluten intolerances were unheard of a few short years ago. But today, the reality is that it is a very present disease causing much discomfort. Dr Michael Gregor has written a recent article on what to do if you do suspect problems.

Signs of gluten sensitivity can have several symptoms to help identify if there is a problem. Irritable bowel type symptoms such as bloating, abdominal pain, and changes in bowel habits, are obvious to watch for. Also, be aware of systemic manifestations such as brain fog, headache, fatigue, depression, joint and muscle aches, numbness in the extremities, skin rash, or anemia.

The first thing to do is to get a formal evaluation for celiac disease, which currently involves blood tests and a small intestinal biopsy. If the evaluation is positive, then a gluten-free diet is necessary. If it's negative, even with the symptoms described, it is best to try a healthier diet with more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans while avoiding processed junk foods. In the past, a gluten-free diet had many benefits over the traditional western diet because it required increasing fruit and vegetable intake—so no wonder people felt better eating gluten-free: no more unhealthy bread products, no more fast food restaurants. Now, with the growing trend of gluten allergies, there is just as much gluten-free junk food out there on the market.

If a healthy diet doesn't help, then the next step is to try ruling out other causes of chronic gastrointestinal distress. In a study of 84 people who claimed gluten caused them adverse reactions, about a third didn't appear to have gluten sensitivity at all. Instead, they either had an overgrowth of bacteria in their small intestine; were fructose or lactose intolerant, or had a neuromuscular disorder like gastro-paresis or pelvic floor dysfunction. Only if those are also ruled out, would I suggest people suffering from chronic suspicious symptoms try a gluten-free diet. If symptoms improve, stick with it and maybe re-introduce gluten periodically and see if symptoms return.

Unlike the treatment for celiac disease, a gluten-free diet for gluten sensitivity is ideal not only to prevent serious complications from an autoimmune reaction, but to resolve symptoms and try to improve a person's quality of life. However, a gluten-free diet itself can also be restrictive, so it's a matter of trying to continually strike the balance.

One needs to be intelligent when making changes. In seeking a better lifestyle, gluten-free foods can be expensive, adding much more to the weekly budget, whereas, it may be that using an extra bunch of kale or blueberries may have significant effects.

- Michael Gregor MD, Feb.25, 2106

“Those who think they have no time for healthy eating, will sooner or later have to find time for illness.”

Selected

healthbites

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Almond Joy:

A Handful a Day Boosts Diet Health

ScienceDaily, February 22, 2016

The University of Florida has studied the effect that the addition of almonds can have on a person's diet quality.

The study resulted in suggesting a whole food approach, like adding almonds to one's diet, may be an achievable way to improve health. Alyssa Burns, doctoral student carrying out the study, added that including a variety of fruits, vegetables and nuts to your diet can improve overall diet quality.

Barley Helps With Weight Loss and Diabetes

EmaxHealth, February 21, 2016

Barley is an often overlooked and misunderstood food you should consider including as part of your weight loss programme. As an added bonus, barley can play a significant role in the management of diabetes, a condition often associated with being overweight. Barley is also a super-food for vegetarian weight loss.

It is easy to prepare for consumption, just add water, boil and simmer.

Barley also contains a special fibre called Beta Glucan which helps lower cholesterol.

Energy Drinks Trigger Abnormal Heart Rhythm, Rise in Blood Pressure

ScienceDaily, March 2, 2016

A clinical trial led by researchers from the University of the Pacific and David Grant Medical Center adds to the evidence that energy drinks may be bad for the heart.

The researchers measured the heart rhythm and blood pressure of 27 healthy volunteers aged between 18-40 before any drinks were consumed and four times during the six hours immediately afterwards.

The volunteers who consumed the energy drink experienced a statistically significant increase in abnormal heart rhythm risk. These volunteers also experienced a slight rise in blood pressure. These effects persisted for two hours after consumption.

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The Benefits of Beans

If we can't take gluten into our systems, then it would be good to have some alternative ideas as to what we can eat. We again turn to Dr Michael Gregor for some advice.

"I've talked previously about the anti-diabetic and anti-obesity effects of various phytonutrients in beans,

but beans have protective effects on the cardiovascular system as well. As one academic review suggested, plant-specific compounds can have a remarkable impact on the health care system and may provide therapeutic health benefits, including the prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders.

Plants have antioxidant effects, anti-inflammatory effects, protect our livers, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and help prevent aging, diabetes, osteoporosis, DNA damage, heart disease and other disorders. Those without legumes in their daily diet, for example, may be at quadruple the odds of suffering high blood pressure.

Legumes such as chickpeas have been used to treat high blood pressure and diabetes for thousands of years. And they can also lower cholesterol levels. Researchers placed people in Northern India on high fat diets to raise their cholesterol levels up to that of the Western world (up around 206 mg/dL) and swapped chickpeas for some of the grains they were eating. In five months, their cholesterol levels dropped to about 160, almost to the target of around 150. Cholesterol was reduced more than 15 percent in most of the subjects. In a randomized crossover trial, two servings a day of lentils, chickpeas, beans, or split peas cut cholesterol levels so much that many participants moved below the range for which statin drugs are typically prescribed.

In the India study, although the subjects' cholesterol levels were comparable to the Western world at the start of the treatment with chickpeas, before the study the participants were eating a low-fat diet. So low that their cholesterol levels started out at 123, well within the safe zone. Only after packing participants' diets with saturated fat were the researchers able to boost their cholesterol up to typical American levels, which could then be improved by adding chickpeas. So, it would be better if they just ate healthy in the first place. Or even better, make a healthy hummus: to add to a healthy diet with lots of legumes."

—Michael Gregor M D, March 1, 2016



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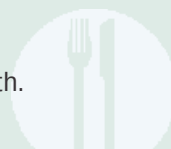


Recipe - Hummus

3c unsalted, cooked chickpeas
1 clove garlic, or ¼ t garlic powder
1t salt

½ c Tahini, or ¾ c sesame seeds
5T lemon juice
1-3t cumin (opt)

Purée chickpeas with all other ingredients in a food processor until smooth. Use enough water to make a thick purée.



What's Cooking with natural Foods, p.47. Compiled by Angela Hurley