



Gluten and Other Common Food Allergies

What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein that is present in wheat, rye, spelt and barley. This is what gives bread dough its elasticity. It is present in so many things we eat regularly; breads, crackers, pasta and many of which you would never think of like ice cream, gravy, processed meat and even soy sauce. People with an intolerance to gluten have a variety of symptoms from skin irritations like Eczema, fatigue to serious intestinal issues. For people who have Celiacs disease, any gluten in their system causes an immune response that damages the small intestine, and interferes with the absorption of nutrients from food.

What is the difference between gluten and wheat?

Gluten is a protein present in wheat. There are people who are intolerant or have allergies to wheat but have no problem with gluten. These people often turn to spelt bread or use spelt flour in place of regular flour.

What are the most common allergens?

The big "8" allergens are: Wheat/Gluten, Dairy, Egg, Soy, Peanuts, Tree nuts, Fish and Shellfish. There are also quite a few people who are allergic to corn which is in many processed foods.

Where can I get more information about food allergies?

The Food Allergy Network

<http://www.foodallergy.org/default.htm>

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

<http://www.acaai.org/public/advice/foods.htm>

The Celiac Sprue Association

<http://www.csaceliacs.org>

Celiacs.com

<http://www.celiac.com>