

What Really May be Ailing You

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Last week I talked about enhancing your immune system. Often we think of vitamins, minerals, herbs or medical intervention to assist us in our ailments when actually the underlying antagonist can be a food we are eating on a regular basis. A food as common as wheat.

Read this list carefully. Are any of these common in your experience: allergies, gas, bloating, constipation, frequent infections, too much weight, too little weight, food cravings, unexplainable drowsiness after a meal or at inappropriate times during the day, depression, fatigue, snoring, headaches, hormone imbalance, Diabetes, hypoglycemia, itchy skin, sinus congestion, asthma, Osteoporosis or other bone health issues?

Are you also of European descent, particularly of Northern heritage - Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English, German, Scandinavian - or any of the Eastern European and Russian countries?

Does your diet include wheat containing products such as bread, muffins, pasta, bagels, cookies, pastries and pretzels on a regular basis?

No. I am not psychic. I see the relationship between these themes all the time. It is a relationship that is being studied, understood and scientifically confirmed in the way it underlies many health issues.

Here is the problem. The gluten portion of the wheat grain contains a molecule called gliadin (gly-ad-in) that is, in some, antagonistic to the lining of the small intestine. It is like a microscopic razor blade gnawing on your intestinal lining, causing inflammation and destruction of the mucosal lining. This hampers proper digestion and absorption of nutrients necessary to the body. It creates a leaky gut whereby foreign matter is getting into the bloodstream and the body responds with heightened allergy responses. In that the lining of your digestive tract is your body's first line of defense against microbes, if it is compromised, your immune system then falters.

Why has it become an issue? As a culture we love the qualities that gluten gives us in our baked goods. Over the years we have hybrid the grain to have higher gluten content. When we eat cereal or a bagel for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch, cookies or pretzels in the afternoon and then pasta for dinner – our consumption of wheat is way out of proportion. The problem is magnified when this is a day after day routine.

Why Northern Europeans? The grains were first introduced to the Middle East then made their way north. Digestive tracts of Northern Europeans are still

evolving to the change.

How does this impact people's lives? Here are examples of the health improvement of my clients who made the gluten connection: 1) a woman with frequent infections and an inability to conceive a second child is now a healthy proud Mom of her second little boy, 2) a family member is now free from daily headaches as long as she stays away from wheat, 3) a young boy can now sit still in class and has learned to read as a result. As long as he stays away from wheat his Mom doesn't get the call to come pick him up and take him home from school.

How to find out if you are wheat intolerant? There are Saliva and Kinesiology tests as well as the test of removing it from your diet. Do so for a minimum of 2 weeks and observe your body's response. Often people feel improvement within a matter of days.

What to do without wheat? There is life beyond it! I recommend that my clients turn to vegetables (potatoes, yams, squashes) and safer grains (brown rice, millet) as replacement. There are also gluten-free baked goods and pastas, as well as the best invention ever, *Pamela's Gourmet Wheat-free Pancake Mix*. Morgan at The Sawpit Mercantile is wheat savvy and carries these items in her store.