

MYTH: GLUTEN-FREE IS HEALTHIER



REALITY: BEING "GLUTEN-FREE" DOESN'T MAKE SOMETHING HEALTHIER

We all have that one friend who raves about going "gluten-free." But, is a "gluten-free" diet all it's cracked up to be? And, what the heck is "gluten," anyway? Scale Back Alabama values accurate information. Here are some things you should know:

- Gluten is protein that is found in grains such as wheat, barley, and rye. It helps foods maintain their shape and can be found in many foods other than bread, including sauces and salad dressings.
- Most people have no issues eating gluten. A small percentage of people, including those with Celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, require a gluten-free diet.
- Due to the popularity of the gluten-free diet, there are many more gluten-free options on the market. This is great news for those who have a medical condition requiring a gluten-free diet, but can create more confusion for those who do not.

- Gluten-free foods are typically more expensive and often contain higher amounts of sugar, salt, and calories.
- Many gluten-free products do not contain essential B-vitamins, amino acids, or iron, which could result in vitamin or mineral deficiencies.

If you have a gluten sensitivity, here are some tips for you:

- Choose naturally gluten-free foods such as brown rice, oats, corn, and beans instead of gluten-free alternatives for the majority of your food intake.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, nuts, and most meats are also gluten-free.

There is typically no need to eliminate gluten from your diet. Instead of buying gluten-free products, choose whole grain products!

INCLUSION TIPS: Studies have indicated that a gluten-free diet may be beneficial for those with celiac disease, gluten sensitivity, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, ADHD, severe headaches and autism.

Always read the nutritional facts of products you purchase as some gluten-free products may be unhealthy for those with or without gluten sensitivities.

nchpad.org/1069/5469/Nutrition-Corner--The-411-on-Celiac-Disease-and-a-Gluten-Free-Diet

FAMILY MATTERS: If all members of your family can eat gluten, choose from a variety of whole grain options! Whole grains are a great source of fiber and protein, which can encourage weight

loss and help control blood sugar levels. If a member of your family has a gluten sensitivity, choose whole grain options that are naturally gluten-free, such as brown rice, oats, and quinoa.

LINKS:

Whole Grains: choosemyplate.gov/grains

Ditch the Gluten, Improve your Health: health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/ditch-the-gluten-improve-your-health

Gluten-Free Whole Grains: wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain-refined-grain/gluten-free-whole-grains

Healthy Recipes: Tomato-Feta Stuffed Peppers over Barley: realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/tomato-feta-stuffed-peppers