

Gluten-Free Diet Beginner's Tips

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This document is a summary of the top reasons that both allergies and health issues have been increasing in staggering proportions over the last few decades. As long as credit is given as listed above, the contents of this document may be freely shared on websites, blogs, and in publications. Credit constitutes the copyright symbol along with the author's name, title and website address as printed above.

1. Get tested for Celiac disease

If you have not been tested for celiac disease, please get this medical test done before you stop eating gluten. The classic mistake I made was to remove gluten without getting tested because I thought I could just eat gluten again and get tested. According to a leading celiac institution, if you remove gluten from your diet for a long enough period then you will invalidate testing results. Get the test done prior to starting a gluten-free diet.

2. Get a nutritional profile done

Many individuals with celiac disease and gluten intolerance develop nutritional deficiencies and malabsorption problems. Nutritional testing will tell you if you have any deficiencies, which is a very good thing to know before you start the gluten-free diet. A good physician can order these tests for you.

3. Get Educated

Do yourself a favor and become educated in what foods contain gluten and what foods are naturally gluten-free, but often have gluten added. There are many free websites; rich with content to help you become more informed.

4. Consider other non-IgE mediated food allergies or sensitivities

This is important because food additives, preservatives, dyes, chemicals, hormones and antibiotics can cause physical symptoms and adverse reactions. Many individuals with celiac disease or gluten intolerance have additional food intolerances or sensitivities. It is worthwhile to pay attention to how your body reacts to different foods and beverages.

5. Please don't eat too much rice!

No one ever told me that my son could become allergic to rice while on the gluten-free diet. My son, Noah, became allergic to rice after just 18 months on the gluten-free diet. This meant that I lost the benefit of using pre-packaged and processed gluten-free foods since they nearly all contain rice. It was an excruciatingly painful time for our family because I had to make all of Noah's foods from scratch and without any rice. Don't eat rice everyday or all day long. Eat rice-free at least two days a week; two days where you eat no rice in any form. It took over three

years before Noah could eat a small amount of rice. Trust me this is a mistake worth avoiding.

6. Not all Gluten-Free cookbooks are actually gluten-free

Every time I tell someone about this fact, they are shocked. Yes, some cookbooks that state they are gluten-free on the cover actually contain spelt, kamut and other grains that contain gluten. Check the Amazon.com book reviews and read some of the reviews that will testify to this issue. This is true for food allergies beyond gluten as well. Some cookbooks put anything on the cover (gluten-free, dairy-free, egg-free, nut free) and yet still contain those ingredients. Don't ask me how it started; from what I can tell this has been going on for at least 25 years. Every single recipe in my cookbook is free of gluten, dairy, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts and coconut; 75% are free of soy and corn. There are no recipes with shellfish. A mention of cod liver oil as a supplement and the use of Worcestershire sauce (which contains fish) are the only seafood references. Buyers beware on what you are purchasing when it comes to cookbooks.

7. Who are you getting your information from? Are they just out to make money off of you?

As the gluten-free market explodes, there are more and more people entering the market, which has pros and cons to it. If you don't mind getting information from a guy who is lifting facts and recipes from *Craigslist*, then this isn't really a big deal. I do care whom I get my facts from because I have learned the hard way that not getting the right facts can cost me big money and years in medical bills. What kind of credibility does the person you are dealing with have? Who recommends them? Who do they associate with? What is their reputation?

Some businesses and sites are only out to make money. While there is absolutely nothing wrong with this, if you are visiting their website with the expectation that this is where you will find out the latest and greatest scoop, you will not. Some businesses in the gluten-free market have intentionally withheld new products from their website, user groups and forums simply because they did not get paid, or were not selling the product. Buyers beware whom you are dealing with.