



Keys to Gluten-Free Success

Understanding the following factors is an important key to the success of your gluten-free approach. If you are sensitive to gluten, any one of these factors can make your case fail. If you can understand and internalize this knowledge, you will be on the way to dramatically improving your health.

1. A single exposure to gluten can turn on your immune system in a way that makes inflammation worse for weeks. If you have an autoimmune disease, a single gluten exposure can activate the autoimmune process, causing an increase in tissue destruction associated with the disease. If you have rheumatoid arthritis, a gluten exposure can cause further destruction of your joints. If you have Hashimoto's disease, a gluten exposure can cause further destruction of your thyroid gland.
2. Gluten exposure can occur with a trace exposure. One thousandth of the amount that causes the sensitization can trigger an immune response. In other words, if a salad comes to you at a restaurant with croutons on it, and you take them off, the amount of gluten remaining on the salad can send you into a reaction.
3. Topical exposures count. Read the labels on your shampoo, conditioner, soap, etc. Each time you go to buy a new bottle, even if you've read the label before, read it again. Formulas can change. Several patients have experienced problems caused by undetected formula changes.
4. For many patients, other foods like dairy, coffee, or yeast, can create cross-reactions, where the body sees these foods as if they were gluten. If the lab work to identify these cross-reactive foods has not been done in your case, ask Dr. Yanuck about it.
5. All oats contain gluten, even "gluten-free" oats. Unfortunately, research has shown that even so-called gluten-free oats have many parts per million (ppm) of gluten. Until you are feeling and functioning completely well, you need to totally avoid all oats. Once you're better, it might be reasonable to consider introducing infrequent, small servings of oats and seeing how you respond. But, until you're well, you have no reliable way to judge your reaction to these exposures.
6. Having fun is important to your health, and to the success of your case. Learn how to cook gluten-free food that's fun, so the process feels comfortable and sustainable for you. Remember, learning to eat gluten-free is like learning to drive. The first day is the hardest. After a while, you just hop in the car and go.