

Wheat Intolerance

Wheat intolerance is frequently self-diagnosed and may contribute to numerous digestive symptoms such as bloating; flatulence; diarrhoea; constipation and general stomach-aches; as well as general fatigue and lack of energy. Unfortunately, self-diagnosis may be incorrect. If you are reading this and thinking that you have a problem digesting wheat, it is best to undertake appropriate testing with your naturopath/health professional to ensure that a correct diagnosis is achieved. Correct diagnosis can ensure that your diet is nutritional sound and is not depleted or deficient in essential nutrients.

Specifically, it is important to realise that often people replace wheat with spelt. This is sometimes appropriate, and sometimes inappropriate. Spelt is an alternative for some but you should speak to your Naturopath/Nutritionist to determine if it is right for you. Unfortunately, wheat crops are cheaper to maintain and process and there appears to be a lot of unfortunate mixing of the grains. There is no strict regulation as yet to ensure that a product is 100% spelt and until appropriate regulation is implemented, I discourage the replacement of wheat with spelt entirely. Please also note that often those with a wheat intolerance will also experience spelt intolerance as they grains are similar. It is best to replace with other grains entirely such as oat, millet, quinoa, kamut, rice, buckwheat etc.

Remember with all foods that a reaction/intolerance is common when we over consume a specific food. Variety and alternating your grains is imperative to ensure health benefits are attained from foods and no reactions occur.

Symptoms of intolerance

Excessive wheat consumption is strongly linked to numerous health complaints including:

- Lowered immunity
- Sinusitis and nasal catarrh
- Excessive mucous production – nasal, ear wax, chest phlegm
- Digestive discomfort – Irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhoea, constipation, digestive discomfort, others
- Headaches, fatigue and malaise

Foods to avoid

Beverages

Alcohol – beer, gin, whiskey and any drink containing grain neutral spirits, i.e.: all alcoholic drinks except brandy, rum and wine; Milo, Ovaltine, Horlicks, Malted Milk

Breads/Cereals

All breads, crispbreads and crackers unless labeled wheat free or made from wheat free ingredients; White and brown breads; Wholemeal bread; Bran flakes, Wheaties, Wheatbix, Vitabrits etc, wheat germ, most commercial cereals except some cornflakes, rice bubbles and some mueslis (check ingredients)

Flours

Some corn flour from supermarkets, plain, self-raising and bakers flours, cake mixes, pancakes mixes, muffin mixes etc.

Pastries/Desserts

Biscuits; Cakes; Pies; Scones; Pretzels; Cookies; Doughnuts; Some chocolate sweets and candy bars; Puddings

Packaged Foods

Processed foods, processed flour products – especially from white flour products (wheat, rice, cereals), packaged/packet foods, processed meats, cold cuts, sausages etc, fast food, pasta (unless made from gluten free flour, corn, spinach, rye or rice etc)

Sugars

Artificial colourings & preservatives, artificial sweeteners, sugar

Sauces

Honey or sugar condiments/sauces e.g.: sweet & sour, glazed or honeyed; sweet sauces – apple, brandy, plum, sweet chilli, soy sauce – Tamari is a safe replacement

Miscellaneous

Cooked mixed meat dishes, fats used for frying food rolled in flour, fish or fowl rolled in flour, gravies, scones, ice cream cones, malt products or foods containing malt, meat rolled in crumbs, most cooked sausages and small goods, some mayonnaise, pancake mixtures, sauces, synthetic pepper, some yeasts, thickening in ice-creams, waffles, bread and biscuit crumbs, dumplings, noodles, soups that are powdered or canned; most fast foods and take away foods

Important

- Prepare food in separate containers without contacting stuffing, dressing, sauces, gravies, steam cooking and frying fats. Study the labels of foods and determine if they contain wheat or wheat by-products.
- Do not expect restaurants to be accurate, anticipate this when ordering.
- All rye products are not entirely free of wheat.

What to eat

Protein

Lean meats: Beef, chicken, turkey, veal (hormone free); Legumes, pulses, beans, lentils; Fish & seafood: tinned tuna & salmon (in spring water), sardines, fresh fish; Tofu, tempeh & other soy products; Organic eggs (hormone free); Nuts & seeds – raw, unsalted, fresh (except peanuts); Nut butters: ABC butter (almond, brazil & cashew nuts); almond butter, cashew butter; Tahini, humous, babaganoush & other dips

Beverages

Herbal teas; green tea; dandelion coffee & tea; Plain low sodium mineral water, filtered/spring water – can be flavoured with fresh lemon or lime juice; Fresh vegetable juices: beetroot, celery, parsley, ginger, tomato, cucumber, carrot

Milk

Soy, goat's, sheep's, cow's, rice, oat, almond, and other milks, (make sure that they are not sweetened with malt or sugar and obviously avoid types that are inappropriate for you).

Breads

Breads made from rice, oat, soy, corn, rye, kamut, quinoa, pumpkin and other grains. Breads should be labelled 'wheat free'. Try health food shops or the health food section of your local supermarket.

Cereals

Puffed rice, puffed corn, rolled rice (for homemade porridge), corn flakes, rice bubbles, oats, millet, quinoa, kamut, barley, spelt

Crackers/Crispbreads

Rice cakes/thins; Corn cakes/thins, oat cakes, Ryvita, finn crisps, rye kavli

Pasta

Pasta from other grains, rice, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, rice or bean vermicelli

Flour

Pure maize/corn, soy, potato, barley, buckwheat, rye, tapioca, rice, kamut, quinoa, spelt

Breadcrumbs

Millet meal, rice bran, ground nuts or seeds, oats

Conclusion

In summary it is essential that you obtain an accurate diagnosis of wheat intolerance or allergy. Grains are an important part of one's diet, are a highly nutritious food source and should not be avoided unless indicated. Please make sure that you seek appropriate advice from a naturopath/nutritionist to ensure that you eat a balanced diet and obtain optimal nutrition.

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