

Another view: Celiacs, Pseudo-Celiacs and Wheat Allergies

The celiac needs a gluten-free diet. The pseudo-celiac needs a diet based on whole grains and should exclude refined sugars and refined grains. Those who develop a wheat allergy need a wheat free diet.

Celiacs

The gluten-free diet was designed as a medical diet to help those born with the rare genetic disorder known as *celiac disease*. The prime symptoms are the result of very poor absorption of food in the small intestine, which is caused by damage to the small intestine wall by gluten. The distended belly, which gave the disease its name, and other symptoms, are essentially the same as those seen in malnourished and starving people. The wide range of symptoms, make early diagnosis of celiac disease difficult. Hereditary celiac disease is a rare condition, known at least since the first century AD. The true cause, due to damage to the small intestine by gluten in susceptible people, was not realized until the 1950s. The presence of hereditary celiac disease can be proved by intestinal biopsy, followed by remission on a gluten-free diet.

Pseudo-Celiacs

When normal people have symptoms of malnourishment, generally there must be another cause than celiac disease. A gluten-free diet may by chance improve symptoms of malnourishment, because missing nutrients are co-incidentally supplied. When symptoms, especially digestive problems and a distended belly, are similar to those seen in celiac disease patients, it is useful to call the syndrome *pseudo-celiac disease*.

In the case of *pseudo-celiac disease* we need to look at the deficiencies in the diet that could be causing the malnourishment symptoms. If we consider the most basic foods, the grain foods, wheat, rice and corn, we immediately see that these are predominantly presented in a deficient form. The bran and germ that are removed during processing contain exactly the vitamins, minerals and enzymes necessary for the production of energy at the cellular level, and for the utilization of grain carbohydrates and proteins in the body. Refined sugars are by definition presented in the purified form and also therefore do not supply any of the vitamins, minerals or other phytochemicals needed for the effective conversion of these sugars to energy at the cellular level, in the human body. Hence the suggestion that the diet to recommend for the *pseudo-celiac* would be a diet based on whole grain foods, and which excludes refined sugars and refined grains.

Wheat Allergies

There are several proteins in wheat. Gluten is the name given to just one group of proteins found in the central wheat endosperm, and which gives desirable bread texture. There are other proteins in the endosperm, in the germ and in the aleurone layer surrounding the endosperm of wheat. Theoretically a person could become allergic to any of these proteins.

Allergic reactions are usually fast in onset and are revealed as rashes, swellings, asthma, sneezing and do not usually last for a lifetime. While there is a risk for a wheat allergy, the diet would need to be specifically wheat-free rather than gluten-free.