

Your Guide to Gluten-Free Living: Wellness from the Inside Out

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Why Consider Going Gluten-Free?

While gluten isn't the villain for everyone, there's growing evidence that for some, especially those dealing with **chronic inflammation**, autoimmune concerns, or energy issues, gluten may be doing more harm than good—even in the absence of celiac disease.

Gluten and Inflammation: A Gut Check

- Gluten can increase **intestinal permeability** (aka “leaky gut”) in sensitive individuals.
 - This can trigger the immune system to go into high alert, promoting **systemic inflammation**—a root driver behind many chronic health issues.
 - A gluten-free diet can help calm the immune response, reduce inflammation, and support **digestive integrity**.
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Weight and Metabolic Balance

- Many clients notice reduced **bloating** and easier **weight regulation** when gluten is removed.
 - Processed gluten-containing foods are often highly refined and spike blood sugar.
 - Removing gluten can naturally steer your diet toward more **whole, nutrient-dense choices**—a win for metabolism.
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Autoimmune Conditions & Immune Support

- Gluten is a known trigger in **celiac disease**, but research also links it to flare-ups in other autoimmune conditions like:
 - Hashimoto's Thyroiditis
 - Rheumatoid Arthritis
 - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Even without a formal diagnosis, a gluten-free trial may reduce immune activation and **lessen flare severity**.
 - A more stable, less "on-guard" immune system = better overall vitality and resilience.
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Potential Benefits of a Gluten-Free Lifestyle

Many clients experience:

- ✓ Reduced bloating and gas
 - ✓ Clearer skin
 - ✓ Better focus and fewer headaches
 - ✓ Increased energy
 - ✓ Fewer joint aches
 - ✓ More stable moods
 - ✓ Better digestion and nutrient absorption
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What Exactly is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, rye, and their derivatives. It gives bread that chewy texture—but in some bodies, it gives the immune system a reason to throw a tantrum.

Gluten Sensitivity vs. Celiac Disease

	Celiac Disease	Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity
Immune system response	Autoimmune (damages gut lining)	Innate immune activation
Symptoms	Digestive, fatigue, nutrient deficiency	Similar, often milder
Long-term risk	High without strict diet	Still being studied
Testing	Blood tests & biopsy	No single test—diagnosis by exclusion

Symptoms That May Improve with a Gluten-Free Diet

- Brain fog
 - Digestive issues (bloating, diarrhea, constipation)
 - Joint/muscle pain
 - Skin rashes (eczema, psoriasis)
 - Fatigue
 - Hormonal imbalance
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Naturally Gluten-Free Superstars

- **Fruits & Veggies:** fresh, whole, colorful
- **Gluten-Free Grains:** quinoa, millet, rice, amaranth, teff
- **Proteins:** eggs, grass-fed meats, wild fish, legumes

- **Healthy Fats:** olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds
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Common Gluten Sources to Avoid

- Wheat (including spelt, kamut, farro, semolina)
 - Barley (malt, beer, malt vinegar)
 - Rye
 - Processed foods with hidden gluten (soy sauce, gravies, dressings)
 - Anything labeled without a **gluten-free certification** if you're highly sensitive
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Sneaky Sources of Gluten

- Medications and supplements (read the labels!)
 - Body care products (yes, even lipstick)
 - Restaurant cross-contamination (always ask!)
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Pro Tips for Going Gluten-Free

1. **Start with a pantry clean-out.** Ditch the bread, pasta, and mystery cereals.
 2. **Batch cook naturally gluten-free meals**—roasted veggies, quinoa salads, protein bowls.
 3. **Read labels like a detective.** “Wheat-free” ≠ gluten-free.
 4. **Support your gut.** Consider bone broth, probiotics, and anti-inflammatory herbs like turmeric and ginger.
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Pro Tip from a Functional Lens:

You don't need to wait for a diagnosis to try gluten-free living. If you're struggling with symptoms that haven't been resolved by standard approaches, this could be the missing piece.

Gluten-Free = Empowered Living

Gluten-free doesn't mean flavor-free or fun-free. It's a path toward **clarity, control, and confidence** in how your body feels.

You're not just removing gluten—you're making space for nourishment, balance, and healing.

Food Label Cheat Sheet: How to Spot Sneaky Gluten

First, Check for These "Gluten Clues" on the Label:

Look under **Ingredients** and the "**Contains**" statement (usually listed under the ingredient list).

Common Gluten-Containing Ingredients:

If you see any of these, it's a no-go:

- **Wheat** (durum, einkorn, emmer, farina, farro, graham, kamut, semolina, spelt)
 - **Barley** (including malt, malt extract, malt syrup, malt flavoring)
 - **Rye**
 - **Triticale** (a wheat/rye hybrid)
 - **Brewer's yeast**
 - **Wheat starch** (unless labeled gluten-free)
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Watch Out for These Sneaky Sources:

These don't scream "gluten," but they may still contain it:

- Modified food starch (especially if source isn't listed)
 - Natural flavors (may be derived from gluten-containing grains)
 - Seasonings and spice blends
 - Soy sauce (use tamari instead!)
 - Imitation meat or seafood
 - Gravies and sauces
 - Broths and bouillon
 - Salad dressings and marinades
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Look For These Safe Words:

- "Certified Gluten-Free"
 - "Made in a Gluten-Free Facility" (bonus)
 - "Contains: NONE OF THE 8 MAJOR ALLERGENS" (but still double-check)
 - *Tamari* (gluten-free soy sauce)
 - *Gluten-free oats* (standard oats are often cross-contaminated)
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Non-Food Items to Watch (Yes, Really):

- **Supplements** (check capsule fillers)
- **Medications** (ask pharmacist about gluten-containing binders)

- **Body care products** (lip balm, toothpaste, lotion)
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Tess's Quick Tips:

- If it has **more than 1 ingredient**, read the label—even if it *looks* gluten-free.
- If you're not sure, **skip it or ask the manufacturer**.
- When in doubt, stick to **whole foods you recognize**.

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