



GLUTEN INTOLERANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Gluten intolerance has been found to be most common among people of Irish, English, Scottish, Scandinavian, and Eastern European descent. Often time's it is assumed that gluten intolerance is a food allergy, but it is not. It is actually an autoimmune process, which affects an alarming percentage of the population. The most significant symptoms are **weight gain, fatigue, and depression.**

A Brief Explanation of Gluten Intolerance

A person with gluten intolerance cannot digest the protein portion of many commonly eaten grains. When this protein is ingested it combines with the enzyme *transglutaminase* to form an immune complex that is deposited on the lining of the intestines. The body recognizes this as a foreign substance, and so begins an immune reaction to the complex. Immune cells come into the area and release a series of toxins to try to "kill" this unidentified immune complex. These toxins from the immune system cause inflammation in the digestive system and damage the lining tissue. This is what causes the unexplained digestive symptoms like bloating, diarrhea, constipation, gas, and cramping. The toxins are also responsible for feelings of fatigue and malaise after a meal containing these foods.

The walls of the digestive tract are lined with immune cells that form a protective barrier called *Secretory IgA*. This lining protects against infectious agents such as bacteria, parasites, and fungus. If a person with gluten intolerance continues to eat the gluten, in time the constant inflammation and irritation in the digestive tract wears away the Secretory IgA. This depletion of immune cells makes a person very susceptible to infectious agents it would normally be able to fight off. The inflammation may also begin to damage the small intestine, which affects the person's ability to absorb the nutrients they need. You quite literally are what you eat, and if your body isn't able to properly absorb your food, you will suffer from a myriad of health problems.

The primary symptom associated with mal-absorption resulting from gluten intolerance is a combination of fatigue and weight gain. If you are not properly absorbing your food, you will not be getting any of the nutrients from the food you eat. This will leave you constantly hungry and endlessly tired. Without proper absorption of nutrients, mineral and vitamin deficiencies can develop. Muscle cramping is a common symptom that can arise from a magnesium deficiency, as the lack of magnesium impairs muscle contraction. Magnesium deficiency has also been linked to cardiovascular disease. An inability to absorb calcium can lead to osteoporosis. Mineral deficiencies can also create feelings of restlessness and an inability to relax. It can also make sleep difficult and create insomnia. If you cannot absorb B vitamins, you will develop weakness, fatigue, and malaise. If you cannot absorb fats, then you cannot control inflammation, and since most

hormones are made from cholesterol, you will not have the building blocks to synthesize hormones. This among other things can create hormone imbalances, interfering with your ability to handle stress and maintain a balanced emotional state. This also contributes to weight gain in a substantial way. Your hormones have a large effect on your metabolism and your ability to process fat and carbohydrates. Imbalance in insulin will eventually lead to diabetes.

There is also a phenomenon that causes people to crave things that they are allergic to. There are many theories as to why this happens but the exact mechanism is not yet fully understood. However this is the reason why many people crave carbohydrates and become “addicted” to them, much the way an alcoholic becomes addicted to alcohol.

There are cells lining the intestinal tract that create enzymes to digest food. They too are damaged in this process. If the body cannot secrete the enzyme lactase, lactose can no longer be digested and the person becomes intolerant to dairy products. They may also lose their ability to digest protein, which can lead to a deficiency in amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks for neurotransmitters, one of which is *serotonin*. Low levels of serotonin have been medically linked to depression and insomnia.

Eventually the digestive tract develops gaps in areas of constant inflammation. This condition is referred to as “leaky gut syndrome.” When this occurs these immune complexes form a gluten reaction, which then enables undigested food particles, parasites, bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other invaders to leave the GI tract and enter into the blood stream. This increases the body’s susceptibility to illness. It is also the origin of many food allergies. Food is supposed to be fully digested, broken down, and filtered through the liver before it ever enters the blood stream. As undigested food particles slip through the gaps into the blood stream, the body’s immune system identifies them as foreign invaders, and creates immune cells to protect it. Then next time you eat these foods the body remembers these items as a potentially threatening invader and creates a reaction to them resulting in a food allergy.

These are possible reactions that *can* occur over time with a person who is gluten intolerant. Not all people will react in an extreme way, but if you do have intolerance to gluten it is very important that you identify it and avoid all products containing gluten. Answer the following questionnaire to identify if you are gluten intolerant.

Do any of the following apply to you?

Yes No

		Weight gain
		Unexplained fatigue
		Difficulty relaxing, frequently feel tense
		Unexplained digestive problems
		Female hormone imbalances, (PMS, menopausal symptoms)
		Muscle or joint pain or stiffness of unknown cause

		Migraine-like headaches
		Food allergies/sensitivities
		Difficulty digesting dairy products
		Tendency to over-consume alcohol
		Overly sensitive to physical and emotional pain, cry easily
		Cravings for sweets, bread, carbohydrates
		Tendency to over-consume sweets, breads, carbohydrates
		Abdominal pain or cramping
		Abdominal bloating or distention
		Intestinal gas
		"Love" specific foods
		Eat when upset, eat to relax
		Constipation or diarrhea of unknown cause
		Unexplained skin problems/rashes
		Difficulty gaining weight

Have you suffered from any of the following conditions?

Yes No

		Allergies
		Depression
		Anorexia
		Bulimia
		Rosacea
		Diabetes
		Osteoporosis/bone loss
		Chronic fatigue
		Irritable bowel syndrome

		Crohn's disease
		Ulcerative colitis
		Candida
		Hypoglycemia
		Lactose intolerance
		Alcoholism

Scoring Your Questionnaire

Test Interpretation Guide (combine both sections)

Number of "Yes" Responses		Potential for Gluten Intolerance
4 or less	=	Not likely
5 – 8	=	Suspected
9 or more	=	Very likely

If you scored 5 or higher on the questionnaire, we recommend you eliminate all gluten-containing foods from your diet for a minimum of two months. At the end of the two months you will notice significant relief (if not elimination) from some, and possibly all of your symptoms. After these two months you can do simple test. The test is to consume gluten at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If over the next 72 hours you do not have any unwanted symptoms, you are not gluten intolerant. If you do experience unwanted symptoms you can identify yourself as gluten intolerant. You should remain gluten-free for the rest of your life to avoid the unwanted and harmful effects of gluten.

Gluten-free means avoiding all foods containing gluten, including wheat, rye, spelt, bulgar, semolina, couscous, triticale, and durum flour. Gluten can be hidden, so read labels carefully. Be wary of modified food starch, dextrin, flavorings and extracts, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, imitation seafood, and creamed or thickened products such as soups, stew, and sauces.

Michael Finn has extensive experience working with people with gluten intolerance. He has developed unique programs to allow you to achieve your health and fitness goals. To learn more about a gluten-free lifestyle, how you can improve your health and fitness level, or to schedule a FREE consultation, call us at (707) 781-3466.