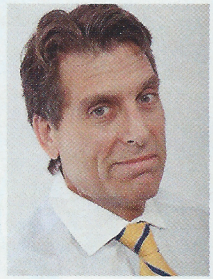


Jonathan Dashiff, MD

1 PM Room D



NO GRAIN, NO PAIN

Understanding the cycle of chronic illness plaguing so many begins with realizing that the most prevalent staple in today's diet may be at the center of it all.

By Brigitte Surette

We're told that whole grains are good for us. They line our supermarket shelves and crowd our pantries. Rich in fiber, packed with nutrients, extremely versatile, and enjoyable anytime of day, they're marketed now almost as extensively as refined grains—only healthier! Good for an energy boost, thanks to all those carbohydrates, they are frequently touted for their ability to lower a person's risk for cardiovascular disease and cancer. Wonderful, right?

Not quite. Despite their five-star reputation, whole grains still have, just like refined grains, what many would deem a major flaw: gluten.

Ten thousand years ago, humans were not ingesting grains; the diets of hunter-gatherers consisted mainly of meats and vegetables. That all changed when people started settling down, and in the past century alone, our dependence on grain-based products with lengthy shelf lives has left many of us with unbalanced diets that are making us as sick as they are filling us up. Physicians are now discovering that the GI tract (also known as the "second brain" because it boasts more neurons than our actual brain) simply cannot break down gluten. It sits in the system and festers, like a virus, resulting in inflammation and subsequent disease.

"Recent studies have shown that 1 in 133 people in this country may suffer from an intolerance to gluten," says Dr. Jonathan Dashiff of Linchitz Wellness. "What's more, physicians are finding out that gluten may be the culprit for a host of health problems in a significant percentage of the population." Patients who suffer from gluten intolerance are diagnosed with celiac disease, a condition that damages the lining of the small intestine and prevents it from absorbing vital nutrients. Left untreated, though, it has the potential to lead to even more serious diseases like cancer. "An old-school practice for determining celiac disease is an intestinal biopsy," explains Dr. Dashiff, "but that test isn't the gold standard anymore because gluten may be causing more than just inflammation in the GI tract." Another measurement of the immune system's reaction to gluten is known as the celiac panel, a series of blood tests known for being fairly accurate, but still capable of showing false negatives.

Patients who live for decades with chronic problems like bloating, indigestion, fatigue, muscle cramps, depression, anemia, joint pains, and, in rare cases, seizures, may actually be suffering from undiagnosed gluten sensitivity or full-blown celiac disease. It can even masquerade as leaky gut, irritable bowel syndrome, and infertility. Medications are then often prescribed to deal with the symptoms, as well as the probable side effects, and the initial problem goes unresolved. In fact, the average age of celiac disease diagnosis in the United States is 40 to 50. While in Italy, for example, newborns are tested for it. "We should be doing the same," insists Dr. Dashiff. "Celiac disease could

be the main factor in an infant's failure to thrive." He also advocates genetic testing to understand the family history and determine a patient's propensity for developing the intolerance later in life.

Dr. Dashiff's approach to celiac disease is characteristic of physicians who practice integrative medicine. Combining traditional medicine with holistic practices, it is focused on the individual patient rather than just generalized symptoms. Every solution must be unique. "If a patient exhibits a symptom, you can't just attempt to treat it exclusively," says Dr. Dashiff, explaining that integrative medicine digs for the underlying problem, which turns out to be gluten for far too many. "Conventional medicine only recognizes true gluten allergies, but whether it's gluten allergies, celiac disease, or gluten sensitivity, it all takes you to the same place."

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One of the featured speakers at the next NAVEL Expo, Dr. Dashiff will address the most recent findings regarding celiac disease and shed light on the symptoms of gluten sensitivity that mimic other diseases. Lecture attendees will also receive a detailed booklet of information that includes gluten-free diets, everyday products that contain gluten, and an index of restaurants that offer gluten-free menus.

Discomfort is discomfort, regardless of the severity, and gluten keeps coming up guilty, no matter the extent of a person's sensitivity. "I have patients whose family members all suffer from celiac disease while they do not," says Dr. Dashiff. "Yet they still choose a gluten-free diet and find that they feel remarkably better. They adapt it for life." So why wait for disease to be diagnosed when patients can begin seeing change by simply removing the instigating agent? Dr. Dashiff's point exactly.

*Prior to joining the world of integrative medicine, **Jonathan Dashiff, MD**, studied at Brookdale Hospital and Downstate Medical Center and spent 20 years in the field of orthopedic surgery and sports medicine. He was the team physician for the New York City Fire Department football team, as well as a Golden Gloves ringside physician for over 1,000 fights. Working with athletes to improve performance, Dr. Dashiff began to see all the different non-allopathic ways to treat patients. He found that good nutrition and healthy living were valid and incredibly effective ways to prevent injury and disease. Today, Dr. Dashiff is one of the leading integrative medicine experts in New York. He is trained in prolotherapy with ozone, quantum bio-feedback, oxidative therapies, and bio-identical hormones and has appeared on television programs like Long Island Naturally, where he advises listeners about the benefits of gluten-free diets and healthy living for vibrant, long-term living. For more information, please visit www.linchitzwellness.com*