

Gluten a hidden problem for many!

One of the main topics in nutrition today is gluten. Gluten has been shown to be a cause of many chronic symptoms that people are having. About 12 years ago, the South Beach diet gained popularity because of the dramatic changes that some people felt when following the protocol.

Dr. Agaston, who developed this diet, realized that in the initial phase of it he had removed all grains from the diet plan. Consequently, gluten was removed. Gluten is the major protein found in wheat barley and rye.

Amazingly, gluten can also show up in some very strange places that you would never suspect. It has been found in some chocolate, deli meats, soy sauce and sometimes is even found in toothpaste.

Dr. Agaston found that many of the individuals who used his diet reported remarkable changes in symptoms besides losing weight. When they added in the gluten after the initial diet, these symptoms returned.

The following are the most common symptoms related to gluten intolerance:

1) The most common symptoms are

gastrointestinal in nature occurring mostly in the stomach.

These can include any of the following: gas, bloating, queasiness, abdominal cramping, constipation, diarrhea, or an alternating combination of both known as IBS or Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

(2) Gluten has also been found to cause headaches and even migraines.

(3) Muscular aches similar to or contributing to fibromyalgia.

(4) Gluten has been shown in some individuals to cause emotional changes such as irritability and sudden mood shifts.

(5) Ingestion of gluten can cause neurological symptoms like dizziness, balance problems, and even peripheral neuropathy causing pain, weakness, tingling or numbness in the extremities.

(6) After ingesting gluten a common symptom is fatigue. If you eat it at every meal and are sensitive to it, you may experience the effects of chronic fatigue.

If you choose to be gluten-free be very careful because many of the foods that are labeled

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that way are very high in sugar and other processed grains.

A gluten-free diet should eliminate wheat, rye, barley, spelt, kamut, oats, and triticale which are grains with gluten. Quinoa, buckwheat, and sorghum grains and rice are gluten-free.

But what is gluten? It is that part of the wheat that is the glue that holds things together. In making bread, it is the substance that gives the bread its body.

Today, gluten is often added by the bakeries because they do not take the time to let the bread rise as it was in the past. If you are making your own bread, the yeast reduces the amount of gluten in the bread as it is partially digested by the yeast.

Unless you have a serious disease like celiac disease, you don't have to completely give up gluten. A reduction in gluten containing foods in your diet can have very positive effects. It has been estimated that about 50% of the population is gluten sensitive. Unfortunately, there is no reliable blood test for gluten sensitivity.

In applied kinesiology, we can use muscle testing and other factors to help determine if you are gluten sensitive. Otherwise, you can go on a gluten-free to extremely gluten-free diet and see if you experience positive effects. The best way to do this is to initially give up all gluten and then begin gradually adding in some foods with gluten and see how you feel.

Your trial period of being gluten free has to last at least 2 weeks and in some people needs to be up to 2 months.

You should observe to see if you have better digestion, experience fewer headaches, have more energy, have less heartburn, and also have less symptoms related to inflammation in your body like arthritic pains, eczema, psoriasis, or fibromyalgia. Most individuals who do this will notice that they lose weight.

Remember, for most people you don't have to give up all gluten foods, just dramatically reduce the amount you consume.

Nutrition bars; the good and the bad

It has become common for people to snack on nutrition bars. Like everything else in life there are good ones and bad ones.

In order to determine which are the better ones, you need to read the list of ingredients.

The first thing to look for is what is the most plentiful item or ingredient in the bar.

You want to avoid any bar that lists flour as the first ingredient.

You also want to stay away from any bars that contain palm oils or artificial ingredients. Also, look for the names of the different types of sugars that are added.

You will see names like corn syrup, glucose, sucrose, and other terms used to hide sugars inside these bars.

Don't be misled by claims on the label that they are nutritious by containing artificial vitamins and protein powders such as soy protein isolate.

Good nutrition bars will have ingredients like whole grains, nuts seeds, fruit, vegetables, and even dark chocolate.

If you're sensitive, try to look for bars that state that they are soy, corn, gluten, and dairy free.

You can make a smart choice in these nutrition bars. When you need that extra boost or are going to skip a meal, these are a good substitute to have handy.

Low Back Supports

It seems where ever you go these days, workers are wearing a back support belt to “protect their spine from injury while they are lifting”. You find them in the gym, in stores and possibly your neighbor is wearing one. Some companies have gone so far as to make it a mandatory safety policy that all their employees wear a back support. This is an American idea and concept.

Do we need a weight belt or did we come standard from the factory with one? Our low back, the lumbar spine, has two supporting systems or stabilizers, an inner unit and an outer unit.

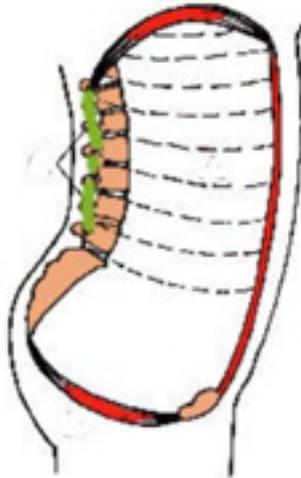
The outer unit consists of many muscles such as the majority of the abdominal wall, the muscles of the back that run along the lumbar spine, the latissimus dorsi, the gluteus maximus (buttocks), the adductors (inner thigh muscles) and the hamstrings. All of these muscles must work in coordination with the inner unit muscles and the related fascial systems.

The inner unit is composed in front by the two parts of the abdominal wall. The first is the transversus abdominis that runs horizontally across the front of our abdomen. The second parts of the abdominal wall are fibers of the internal portion of the oblique or obliquus portion. These fibers run at an oblique angle on the sides of our abdomen. The next section of this internal unit is the floor of the pelvis. The muscles of the back, the multifidus and a structure known as the thoraco-lumbar fascia make up the back of this unit. The top of this unit is the diaphragm. Although there is a definite working relationship among the inner unit muscles, the transverse abdominal appears to be the key muscle of the inner unit system.

When this inner unit is contracted, it causes an increase in stiffness of the spinal and sacroiliac (pelvic) joints. Activation of the inner unit provides the stabilization to give the arms and

legs a working foundation from which to operate. For this stabilization to occur, the transverse abdominal must be activated 30-110 ms prior to activation of arm or leg movements. Failure of this activation is correlated with back pain and/or musculoskeletal dysfunction.

Think of this inner unit as a barrel. The top of the barrel is the diaphragm. The bottom of the barrel is the pelvic floor. The front the barrel is the transverse abdominal muscle and the back of the barrel is the multifidus and fascia of the spine.



As was stated above, the transverse abdominal must contract first and activate this “barrel”. As the transverse abdominal is activated it draws the abdominal wall inward and the organs are pushed upward against the diaphragm and downward against the pelvic floor. This increases the intra-abdominal pressure. When you are lifting a heavy object or exerting yourself as in throwing or pushing an object as in work or sports, it is natural to hold your breath.

Holding your breath while under load is associated with increased tension on the diaphragm. The tightened diaphragm produces a lifting force on the lumbar spine that increases the stability and lifting power of our lower spine.

The function of the transverse is to pull the abdominal wall towards the spine. A simple test to determine if this muscle is functioning is to stand with your hands placed gently over your belly. Bend over to a 60-degree angle and feel if your stomach is pulled in or falls into your hands. If it falls, your transverse abdominal muscle is not working properly.

The symptoms of a poor operating inner system can run the gamut from those related to poor diaphragm functioning like poor breath holding, getting out of breath easily, gastric reflux to the signs of a weak pelvic floor i.e. poor urinary retention or reoccurring low back pains.

Proper testing of the transverse abdominal muscle can disclose weakness patterns. There are a number of techniques that can be indicated to allow proper functioning of this muscle. After correction of underlying imbalances, exercise is usually needed to tone this muscle so that it can properly perform its job.

To properly correct and support the lower back, all factors of this barrel need to be examined and corrected.

If you have a proper functioning "barrel" then there is no need for an artificial belt. In fact, wearing a belt may lead to a weakening effect as the restriction and compression placed on the abdominal wall may lead to a failure of the muscle to contract. This prolonged failure of muscle contraction will, over time, cause the muscle to become flaccid and unable to properly respond to stress.

Short-term use of a belt or brace can be an advantage in healing from an injury, but in the long run you need to strengthen and maintain your own natural "belt".

If you have chronic low back problems, we can test the appropriate muscles and create an exercise program to help you better control and stabilize your back.

Hidden sources of gluten

Soy sauce

Pickles made with malt vinegar which is made from barley (source of gluten)

Hot dogs and Sausages – it's in the filling – read the label

Licorice

Veggie burgers

Salad dressings

Potato chips with flavors

An epidemic: blood sugar problems

Some government estimates show that by 2020 almost half of this country will have diabetes or be pre-diabetic. There are a number of simple things you can do to help stabilize your blood sugar levels in the normal range.

Obviously, the first is to avoid sugars and especially high fructose corn syrup. It is amazing how many places sugar is added into our diet. Even common salt contains some sugar. If you look on the label you may see "maltose" has been added to salt. This is added to stop it from sticking together in humid weather.

Amazingly, getting 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep at night actually helps maintain normal blood sugar levels. If you have problems doing this, please talk to us about ways in which you can improve your quality sleep time. Do you have problems falling asleep or do you wake up after 3 to 4 hours of sleep? There are many things you can do to help improve your sleep process.

The University of Chicago has reported that getting only 5 hours of quality sleep at night can reduce your insulin sensitivity by 16 to 30% and translated, this means more weight gain. The lack of sleep slows your metabolism and consequently results again in an increase in weight. Research from Harvard has shown that getting less than six hours of sleep dulls the insulin producing cells in your pancreas and results in higher blood sugar levels.

The next thing you need to do is to get into a daily exercise routine: 30 to 40 min. of fast walking or other activity every day will help immensely stabilizing your blood sugar levels.

The next one is hard to do because it involves stress. Chronic stress causes an increase in the stress hormones in your bloodstream that result in your cells increasing their resistance to the insulin that you produce. This causes two problems in your body, a rise in your blood sugar levels and inflammation. You need to find how you can reduce stress. Not everyone does it the same. Some will find reduced

reactions to stress levels through exercise, others through meditation, or reading. Your goal is find how you best handle stress. One easy thing to do is not to increase your stressors before bed. Don't watch the news/crime shows or try to do your bills. Instead watch a comedy – laugh – do something relaxing, it will help you sleep better.

While the last one was hard to do the next is relatively easy. Amazingly, if you just eat one and a half servings of leafy greens a day you can reduce your risk of diabetes by 14%. This is because the greens contain fiber and minerals that help stabilize your blood sugar locals.

The last thing to consider is to add in some weight training. You don't have to go to the gym and exercise. Your muscles are the biggest burners of sugar in your body. You can climb stairs, do push-ups against the kitchen counter, lift small weights or do other activities that activate your muscles and help to reduce your blood sugar levels.

Following these steps can help you from slipping into the projected 50% that may develop diabetes or a pre-diabetic state.

Coordination Tests for Spinal Problems

The following tests have been used to determine if an athlete has an imbalance that causes him or her to perform at a decreased level. However, these are good tests that anyone can use to determine if there is a structural problem.

The first test is designed to test the coordination of your lower body. While problems above your pelvis can cause abnormal findings, it is usually lower back and pelvic problems that are uncovered in these tests.

Lower spine screening test

Stand with your arms out in front of you.
Close your eyes

March in place raising your legs up and
down 50 times

If everything is in balance you should be
facing straight ahead and have
moved no more than 2 feet in
front of you.

If you twist to one side and move forward or
backward more than 2 feet, something is out
of balance in your pelvis, low back or upper spine.



Head, neck and eye coordination

This test can be critical for athletes who shoot a ball or puck such as in hockey, golf, tennis, basketball or baseball. In these sports, you look at a target and then look away and do your thing.

If there is a structural

problem in your upper neck, head or jaw you will fail this test.

Aim your index finger at an object over 10 feet in front of you like the corner of a wall and the ceiling.



Close your eyes and drop your arm

Then turn your head to one side and look down with your eyes closed.



Raise your arm and point at the spot you were pointing to before.



If every thing is in balance you will be very close to where you aimed before.

If you cannot do this, there is a structural problem in your neck, head or TMJ muscles that needs to be corrected. This, many times explains why an athlete's performance is reduced or severely hampered.

These tests should be done by anyone engaged in sports.

Actually, they should be done by everyone. If one fails these tests, then there is a problem. Failure to correct this problem can result in a more severe problem.

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