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Gluten free lifestyle writer. Author of forthcoming children's book.



## 3 Things You Thought Would Change By Going Gluten-Free

Posted: 12/17/2014 6:34 pm EST | Updated: 12/17/2014 6:59 pm EST

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While going gluten-free is a medical treatment for many, there's no denying that it's also become a fad. You may have tried going gluten-free for a variety of reasons apart from medical -- for example, seeking a smaller waistline, more energy, or clearer skin. Didn't work? Here are a few possible reasons why.

1) A gluten-free diet isn't necessarily a "diet."

Eating gluten-free is a lifestyle for those with celiac disease. The treatment for a celiac diagnosis is a lifelong gluten-free diet. But "diet" in that case isn't what we think of when we usually think of going on a diet. There are multiple definitions. A diet can be defined as "food and drink regularly provided or consumed," "the kind and amount of food prescribed for a person or animal for a specific reason," or "a regimen of eating and drinking sparingly so as to reduce one's weight." The idea of dieting for weight loss (the classic idea of dieting) and a prescription diet (the kind of diet that celiacs must follow) are distinctly different.

If you do have any type of gluten intolerance and are prescribed a gluten-free diet, you may actually gain weight over time. Eating gluten while intolerant can cause damage to your intestines, resulting in your body not properly absorbing nutrients. Thus, celiacs sometimes can't gain weight. Once you reverse the damage and get your body functioning properly again, you'll be able to gain healthy weight.

For non-celiacs, the problem with going gluten-free to reduce weight lies in the many gluten-free options there are from which to choose -- cakes, muffins, breads -- all available in gluten-free form. If you are still eating these things regularly, you won't lose weight just because they're gluten-free. You might even gain some unwanted pounds depending on what's used in place of gluten -- a problem shared by both celiacs and non-celiacs.

2) Gluten-free eating doesn't automatically equate to being energized.

Depression and fatigue are common symptoms of celiac disease (... though sometimes it seems that everything is a possible symptom of celiac disease; and even though there are over 300 symptoms, some people are asymptomatic).

For celiacs, going gluten-free may lessen depression and fatigue, as it did for me, but it's probably not going to give you a runner's high. I was lethargic and thin from years of malabsorption of nutrients, and it took time for me to build up my energy after I went gluten-free. It was only the first step in increasing my overall health, followed by building lean muscle and stamina. No longer do I feel tired and bloated after eating, which means that I have the energy to exercise (which in turn energizes me), and the mental clarity to have the required discipline.

Similarly, I was recently told by a close friend that he tested negative for celiac disease but feels better when he eats gluten-free. Without those debilitating food comas, he has the energy to exercise. Perhaps feeling better when you don't eat gluten is a sign that you might develop celiac disease later in life if you continue to eat gluten -- a result of constant exposure to something, like getting too much sun. Whether this is possible is sure to continue being researched, regardless of what current studies might show.

### 3) Speaking of getting too much sun...

So you thought all your skin problems and acne would go away with the end of gluten, if not with the end of adolescence.

While a gluten-free diet may help from the inside, avoiding beauty/health products containing gluten helps from the outside. Toothpaste, makeup, shampoo -- these, and more, can all contain gluten. For celiacs, if your makeup isn't gluten free, even though you went on a gluten-free diet, you might still notice some skin issues, like acne from your facewash, rosacea, or even *scaliness* around your eyelids from eyeshadow.

Although eating gluten-free does not automatically result in improvements to your waistline, energy level, or skin, it can certainly be a springboard. And for celiacs, the benefits of a completely gluten-free lifestyle, inside and out, are undeniable.

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*Celia Kaye is the name under which writer-filmmaker Kaitlin Puccio pens articles about her experience with gluten sensitivity. Kaitlin has written a forthcoming children's book on Celiac and gluten sensitivity for the Celia Kaye lifestyle brand, and has been a contributor to MindBodyGreen.com. Follow her on Twitter, like her on Facebook, and visit her at CeliaKaye.com.*

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