

Cereal Killers: Celiac Disease and Gluten-Free A to Z

Ron Hoggan

Scott Adams

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Many chronic illnesses can be prevented with health management: eating nutritious food, exercising, not smoking, and avoiding excessive alcohol. But what's healthy for some can be harmful for others. For example, whole wheat flour is generally healthier than processed white flour—except for people who are sensitive to gluten, a protein in wheat grain that gives bread its elasticity. Long-term consumption of gluten damages the digestive tract of gluten-insensitive people and causes celiac disease.

The editors of *Cereal Killers* have gathered approximately eighty essays by twenty-two medical professionals, researchers, and sufferers of celiac disease. Readers learn how gluten affects the body in minor yet devastating ways that often show no symptoms until permanent damage is done. They learn about the differences between gluten sensitivity and celiac disease; proper celiac disease tests; the gluten-free diet; restaurant dining while traveling; genetic testing and bone density testing; gluten-free camps for kids; and handling customer service at a food company. The book concludes with an essay about gluten-free living from the parent of a teenager who was diagnosed at eighteen months, and information about the National Gluten-Free Diet Project.

The editors, both diagnosed with celiac, are also advocates. Dr. Ron Hoggan is a teacher and has written extensively on the topic of gluten sensitivity. He is the co-author of *Dangerous Grains: Why Gluten Cereal Grains May Be Hazardous to Your Health*. Scott Adams founded the *Journal of Gluten Sensitivity* and the Web sites Celiac.com and GlutenFreeMall.com.

The most unique and useful aspect of this collection is its comprehensive range of information, experience, and knowledge from average celiac sufferers and those who research the disease. Some topics provide opposing perspectives (on treatment, testing, diagnosis, etc.) for a 360 degree view of the disease.

It is interesting to note that studies show more people are being diagnosed and a number of common chronic diseases have been linked to gluten sensitivity, like anemia, fibromyalgia, acid-reflux, impaired mental ability, and more. Also of note is the surprising number of foods we consume which contain gluten, like breads, soups, salad dressings, ice cream, and caramel to name a few. With these things in mind, this book would also be useful to readers who may not be aware that they're gluten sensitive.

Unfortunately, there are several problems in the book. There's quite a bit of repetition among content from different writers which editing would have remedied. Bibliographic references are inconsistent and contain several errors. Several of the essays are highly technical, contain clinical jargon, and seem to have been written for a peer review journal rather than a consumer publication.

Despite these glitches, however, this book is worth exploring. Given that wheat is a main staple in the American diet it is important to raise awareness about celiac disease and inquire about one's own health.

ANGELA BLACK (July 27, 2010)

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