

## Toxic Staple: How Gluten May Be Wrecking Your Health and What You Can Do About It

**Anne Sarkisian**

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*Combining personal accounts with exhaustive research, this outstanding book should become a definitive resource on gluten intolerance.*

*Toxic Staple*, Anne Sarkisian's excellent, informative book about gluten, a substance found in wheat and in other grains, is an eye-opener in many respects. A carefully researched and remarkably comprehensive report, it is surprising the book was written by a consumer advocate rather than by a noted physician or scientist. The sheer number of personal accounts about the havoc gluten has caused in people's lives is stunning. The book is based on Sarkisian's seven-year quest to learn everything she could about gluten when she found out her entire family was gluten intolerant.

Stories are the heart and soul of *Toxic Staple*, as Sarkisian herself acknowledges: "The stories in this book describe folks whose lives were negatively affected by a substance most people would categorize as beneficial—or at least benign. Yet when this substance was removed from their diet, almost all of them experienced positive results." The author brilliantly combines these personal accounts, which appear in virtually every chapter, with information gleaned from copious amounts of research; in fact, she cites hundreds of sources within the book, also including a thirty-page bibliography.

While the stories (some about the author's own family members) bring a key human element to *Toxic Staple*, Sarkisian's well-substantiated text is no less impressive. The author provides exhaustive information about celiac disease, the primary disease caused by gluten sensitivity, as well as non-celiac gluten intolerance. It is disturbing to learn, for example, that gluten intolerance has been associated with everything from anemia and neurological disorders to infertility and cancer. Sarkisian walks through each of the health problems gluten intolerance can cause in considerable detail, scrupulously documenting the journey along the way.

The author also spends time on diagnosis and living with gluten intolerance. Diagnosis in itself is a fascinating topic, since it is not always easy to identify gluten intolerance. For those who learn they have it, the author includes several chapters about how to live a gluten-free life. Her personal experience, combined with stories from others, is very valuable.

*Toxic Staple* may well represent a definitive source of information about the deleterious effects of gluten and how to live life without it. Given that the food industry and restaurants are increasingly making gluten-free options available to the public, Sarkisian's book could not be better timed.

**BARRY SILVERSTEIN** (April 16, 2014)

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