



Volunteer Leader Training Guide

Should You Be Eating Gluten-Free?

Rosemary Rodibaugh, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., Professor - Nutrition

Objectives

- Participants will be able to explain who needs to follow a gluten-free diet.
- Participants will be able to describe what gluten is.
- Participants will be able to list foods that contain gluten.

Handouts

- FCS738, **Eating Gluten-Free**, Handout 1 (available through print on demand)
- **Gluten-Free Recipes and Tips for Gluten-Free Cooking and Baking**, Handout 2
- **Evaluation Survey**

Suggestions for Teaching the Lesson

Prior to Teaching the Lesson

- Review lesson guide, **Eating Gluten-Free** handout and **Gluten-Free Recipes and Tips for Gluten-Free Cooking and Baking** handout.
- Have packages of foods containing gluten and some gluten-free foods for label reading activity.
- If possible, have some samples of gluten-free foods to taste. Choose gluten-free foods you can purchase locally or have made from items purchased at local stores.

Outline for Teaching the Lesson

- Start by asking club members if they have heard about gluten and, if so, do they know what it is? Does anyone in the group have celiac disease or gluten sensitivity?
- Explain what gluten is and which grains contain it.

Gluten is a term for proteins found in certain grains: wheat, barley, rye and triticale (a cross between wheat and rye). When mixed with water and stirred or kneaded, gluten forms an elastic substance that gives structure to breads and other baked goods. Without gluten, breads are softer and less sturdy.

- Talk about why people with celiac disease should choose only oats labeled gluten-free (oats may be processed in the same plant that processes wheat and may be cross-contaminated with gluten).
- Look at the **Eating Gluten-Free** handout together. Talk about the naturally gluten-free foods listed on page 2 and how it is possible to eat a healthy balanced diet without eating gluten-containing foods. Also look at the foods that contain gluten on page 3.
- Discuss eating gluten-free by choice vs. necessity.
 - Eating gluten-free is necessary for a person with celiac disease and may be necessary if a person has a gluten intolerance/sensitivity. Explain how the immune system responds by attacking the lining of the small intestine in people with celiac disease.
 - Those who eat gluten-free by choice may do so because of weight-loss claims and claims of increased energy. Explain that people who start eating gluten-free usually eat fewer calories by giving up foods that contain gluten such as donuts, pizza, pastries, etc., which are usually high in calories and low in nutrients. When such foods are eliminated from the diet and replaced with a variety of whole grains and more fruits and vegetables, the diet is healthier and may be lower in calories. It is likely not the avoidance of gluten that makes a person feel better or lose weight, but the fact that they are eating an overall healthy diet without sugary, fatty, refined grain foods.
- Discuss issues associated with not eating gluten-containing foods.
 - Whole grains and breads that contain gluten are a good source of fiber, iron, folate, B vitamins, calcium and other vitamins and minerals. Eliminating these foods could result in not getting enough of those important nutrients.
 - Specialty gluten-free breads and products can be more expensive in the grocery store. They may also have higher sugar or fat content than wheat bread to make them taste better.
 - Those who need to eat gluten-free can still eat a healthy balanced diet by including gluten-free whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean protein foods and low-fat dairy products in their diets.
- Review the **Gluten-Free Recipes and Tips for Gluten-Free Cooking and Baking** handout. Mention that if a person has celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, they will probably need to do a lot more cooking from scratch. Investing in one or more good gluten-free cookbooks will be helpful. There are many gluten-free cookbooks available to purchase and lots of recipes available on the Internet.

Activity

- Distribute food packages and ask participants to look for the words “gluten” or “gluten-free” on the package. Talk about how FDA defines “gluten-free” (see page 2 of the **Eating Gluten-Free** handout).

(A food may be labeled “glutenfree” if it contains less than 20 parts per million (ppm) gluten. The less than 20 ppm standard is based in part on the lowest level at which currently available test methods can reliably detect gluten and is consistent with the 20 ppm standard adopted by the European Union).

- Ask participants to look at the ingredient list to see if there are words listed that might indicate gluten-containing ingredients (see lists on page 3 of the **Eating Gluten-Free** handout).
- Sample recipes of gluten-free whole grains or gluten-free recipes that you've made or foods that have been purchased. Ask participants to discuss how the foods taste. Do they like the foods they have tasted?
- Finish by asking club members to explain some reasons why someone should or shouldn't go gluten-free.
- Ask participants to complete the **Evaluation Survey**.