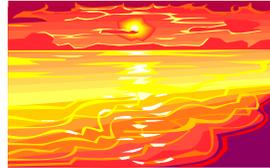


# IBS Treatment Center Newsletter

1229 Madison Street, Suite 1220, Seattle, Washington 98104 (206) 264-1111 [www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com](http://www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com)

August 24, 2006



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## **Courtney**

*Courtney is a 35 year old woman who came to the IBS Treatment Center worried about her chronic diarrhea, gas and abdominal pain. She had been suffering from this problem for several years. She had already been to several doctors and had many tests run. She was tested for celiac disease and the test results showed that she did not have celiac disease.*

*Courtney was very frustrated by this diagnosis. Although she had been told that she did not have celiac disease she found it difficult to believe. She felt better when she avoided gluten, and wondered if it was "just in her head."*

*A complete food allergy blood test showed that in fact she did have a severe immune reaction to gluten and gluten grains, including wheat, spelt, rye and barley, proving that it was not "just in her head." Although she did not have celiac disease, she definitely had an allergy to gluten.*

*Courtney was greatly relieved by the lab results. She was even more relieved when her diarrhea, gas and abdominal pain completely stopped when she learned how to remove gluten from her diet. She said, "It's definitely worth it."*

## **Part 2 of a two-part series: The Many Forms of Gluten Intolerance**

### **Understanding Non-Celiac Forms of Gluten Intolerance**

By Dr. Stephen Wangen

In the first part of this two-part series we discussed and defined celiac disease. In this article we will discuss other forms of gluten intolerance that do not meet the definition of celiac disease.

Celiac Disease is a common problem, but gluten intolerance is far more common than celiac disease. There is a great deal of debate about how to define gluten intolerance and the relevance of forms of gluten intolerance that are not celiac disease. In this article I hope to clarify some of these issues and acknowledge the validity of all forms of gluten intolerance.

### **What do we mean by non-celiac forms of gluten intolerance?**

As a reminder, gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, spelt, kamut, barley and other grains. Many people find that they cannot tolerate gluten, but they do not test positive on any of the tests used to diagnose celiac disease. These tests include the biopsy of the small intestine, and the endomysial, reticulin, and tissue transglutaminase antibody tests. This is a common occurrence and one that I frequently see in my office.

Notice that I did not say that they do not test positive for gluten intolerance. In fact, most of these people do have test results that indicate that they are gluten intolerant, even

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though they do not test positive for celiac disease.

### **How do you test for other forms of gluten intolerance?**

One test that I haven't mentioned yet is the gliadin antibody test. This test is commonly run and is often positive when the others are negative. It is then usually ignored or the physician states that it is a false positive. It makes you wonder why it was run at all. But it is only a false positive if you want it to predict celiac disease. Gliadin antibodies are very poor predictors of celiac disease. However, they are positive for a reason. They indicate that the immune system has formed a reaction against gliadin, which is a fraction of gluten.

This is very important. Just because someone has an immune reaction to gluten does not mean that they will get celiac disease. Remember from the previous article, celiac disease is really another phrase for villous atrophy. So we can rewrite that sentence to say, "Just because someone has an immune reaction to gluten does not mean that they will get villous atrophy." Villous atrophy is a result of the immune reaction to gluten. But it is only one possible result. It is a reaction to gluten that results in an autoimmune reaction to the lining of the digestive tract which results in villous atrophy.

I hope I didn't get too wordy there. You may have to read that twice. What I really want to say is that celiac disease is just one type of gluten intolerance.

### **Are there other tests for gluten intolerance?**

In my office I run a full panel of IgE and IgG antibodies for about 100 different foods and food components. I regularly see elevated antibodies to gluten, gliadin, wheat, barley, rye and spelt. These people usually do not have celiac disease, which I also rule-out. A positive test for any of these foods indicates that they have an immune reaction to those foods.

These patients invariably begin to feel better once they have eliminated these foods from

their diet. They may have digestive symptoms such as constipation, diarrhea, IBS, gas, bloating, or heartburn, or they may have any number of other symptoms, such as fatigue, headaches, arthritis, chronic sinusitis, eczema, etc.

### **What if you haven't run any blood tests, but know that you can't eat gluten?**

There are many people who discover through trial and error that eliminating gluten from their diet helps them to feel much better. These people often have not undergone any testing. And really, what is the point? You don't need someone else to tell you that you feel better.

I always honor my patients' right to know that they can't eat gluten. Who am I to tell them otherwise? There usually isn't any point in testing them, since any test for celiac disease or gluten intolerance will typically be negative once a person has stopped eating gluten for a while. And asking someone to eat gluten for at least a month so that I can verify their gluten intolerance seems illogical when you consider how ill that usually will make them feel.

### **The common treatment for everyone.**

Whether you have celiac disease, are gluten intolerant, or just think that everyone on earth should avoid gluten (I don't think this), then you are left with the same treatment plan, avoid gluten. Some people believe that celiac disease is a more severe form of gluten intolerance, but the evidence does not necessarily support this. Many celiacs are basically asymptomatic. And many non-celiac gluten intolerant individuals are very ill.

### **"Gluten intolerance" covers us all.**

In the end, the words "gluten intolerance" cover anyone who can't eat gluten, regardless of the reason.



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## ***Dining Out with Food Allergies: Go ahead...ask!***

Many of our patients learn that they have food intolerances or allergies and need to restrict certain foods from their diets. This can make eating out more challenging. Fortunately there are a number of restaurants in the Seattle area, including some national chains that recognized that helping people avoid problem foods is in their best interest. We provide a list of restaurants that have accommodations for people with food restrictions on our Center for Food Allergies website (to see the page click [here](#)).

Many of these restaurants have gluten-free menus and/or ingredient lists to help you choose options that will work for you. In correspondence with their management most of these restaurants have indicated that they want to help you as much as possible and direct their staff to accommodate you as well. Some will even have dishes specially prepared to your specifications. All you have to do is ask.

If you know of a restaurant that provides a full ingredient list or alternate menu, please let us know at <mailto:info@IBSTreatmentCenter.com>. We will check their website, or correspond with their management as necessary to get the info we need to add them to the list. If you work for a restaurant and want to know what you can do to better accommodate your patrons with special needs, send an email to the address above and we will be happy to work with you.



## **Events Calendar**

### **Beer Anyone?**

The Gluten Intolerance Group wants to throw a Gluten Free Beerfest in Seattle!

All they need to know is that you're in!



Before they decide to take it all the way, planners want to know that people are interested and what kind of numbers they should expect. They have set October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 from 2pm to 6pm as the tentative date.

**The deadline is this Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, so express your interest now by sending an email to [gfbearfest@yahoo.com](mailto:gfbearfest@yahoo.com). Make it happen!**

### **September: IBS Support Group**

IBS can leave a person feeling lonely and misunderstood, but the truth is that 50 million Americans are dealing with it! Better than knowing you're not alone is learning that it is possible to be rid of IBS! Visit our group for support and get some answers!

Most meetings will be attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and author of *The Irritable Bowel Syndrome Solution*. The group will meet on the **first Tuesday of every month at the IBS Treatment Center**.

[Click here for details.](#)

### **September: GIG (Gluten Intolerance Group) Support Group**

Come to the Central Seattle chapter of GIG and get the latest information while making friends who truly know what life is like without gluten! Bring your best tips and maybe even a recipe to share!

Meetings are held on the **2nd Wednesday of each month at the IBS Treatment Center** (co-located with the Center for Food Allergies) and most will be attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and Center for Food Allergies.

[Click here for details.](#)

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