

Health and Wellness:
Knowing About Grains Is Critical To Your Health

By Laura Jimenez, M.S.W. (www.tpsw.org)

Until something goes wrong with our health, most people don't even know that something as omnipresent as wheat, soybeans and/or corn products could be contributing to one or more long-term health problems. While many grains can produce problems, to keep this article within one page, the focus of attention will be paid to corn, wheat and soybeans. These grains can produce troubles which often times sneak up on us and then wreak havoc. These items are contained in too many products to list but some more popular items are bread, taco shells, veggie burgers, cereal, granola bars and the list goes on and on. This article explains why this is such an important topic and offers alternative food choices.

Why Are Some Grains Problematic? Here are just a few reasons to avoid them because they:

- are associated with allergies, asthma, "candida," Celiac's disease, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, migraines and skin disorders;
- are typically grown with high levels of pesticides and all the many problems that creates;
- have nutritional deficiencies (and the more grains we eat, the less nutritionally-sound foods such as vegetables and fruits we will consume);
- can inhibit the metabolism of important nutrients and cause autoimmune reactions;
- (corn and some soy products) are genetically modified (GM) which makes them withstand pesticides at a huge human sacrifice of making mutant grains that are consumed/hidden in huge quantities daily in the U.S. in processed food;
- (the bran in these grains) are high in phytic acid which binds and inhibits absorption of iron and zinc; and
- have a shallow rooting system which promotes trace element deficiencies because the same area of land is continuously reused for this annual crop.

Depending on which expert, if you didn't know this already, between 60%-80% of our immune system is housed in our intestines. A well-functioning immune system is critical for good health.

Alternative Food Choices: Here are some better food choices:

- avoid all or at least as much processed foods and refined grains as possible;
- choose a rice-based carbohydrate because that grain is not as fragile as the aforementioned ones;
- boost the local economy by patronizing local farmers markets which sell locally-grown produce and avoid large-company GM foods;
- choose items that have a "GM Free" label which are typically located in the "healthy" section as well as beef and poultry raised GM-Free Feed;
- use a SMART shopping guide to learn about safe GM-Free shopping (available for free at www.nongmoshoppingguide.com);
- buy food products which have the USDA Certified organic seal on their packaging because they must contain at least 95% organically-produced ingredients and the remaining 5% CANNOT contain GM ingredients; and
- keep away from non-organic convenience foods because they contain corn, soy, canola, cotton seed, and sugar. Unless the label indicates that it is GM Free, it is safe to assume the product contain GM organisms.

Summary Although there is no magic bullet to stay well, it certainly couldn't hurt follow the suggestions in this article and don't forget to exercise.

Following are some of the websites used for this article:

- 1) <http://nourishedkitchen.com/against-the-grain-10-reasons-to-give-up-grains/>
- 2) <http://www.healingnaturallybybee.com/articles/heal13.php#a5>
- 3) <http://www.celiac.com/articles/21582/1/Unglued-The-Sticky-Truth-About-Wheat-Dairy-Corn-and-Soy/Page1.html>