

WHY THE GLUTEN FREE DIET IS JUST A FAD

Melissa D'Costa

Going gluten-free may be a compulsion for those diagnosed with Celiac disease (also referred to as Gluten Sensitivity) however, it has become increasingly popular both in India and abroad thanks to its celeb following which includes the likes of Victoria Beckham, Gwyneth Paltrow and Milley Cyrus. Recommending it as a weight loss measure is not a good idea according to experts for the following reasons.

Victoria Beckham

What's gluten?

Dr Deepak Chaturvedi, a physician endocrinologist, diabetologist, anti-aging specialist and naturopathic adds, "Gluten is a storage protein found in certain grains like wheat, barley and rye. This protein can damage the intestines leading to mal absorption of nutrients (vitamins and minerals). Gluten Sensitivity is referred to as Celiac disease which is common and may be present in 1 in 100 or 1 in 200 individuals. People who are sensitive to gluten develop symptoms like weight loss, chronic diarrhoea, growth retardation. Skin changes and thyroid dysfunction may also occur in these individuals. Thyroid dysfunction again leads to other symptoms of fatigue, lethargy, growth retardation, memory disturbances, infertility, etc. The skin changes in gluten sensitivity is called Dermatitis Herpetiformis. Complete omission of Gluten from the diet is recom-

mended for these gluten sensitive individuals. The Gluten free diet in these individuals may bring overall improvement in general well-being plus their nutritional assessment scores."

This diet lacks fibre and essential nutrients like vitamin B12 for vegans and vegetarians

Deepshikha Agarwal, dietician and sports nutritionist, says, "People who have gluten intolerance can avoid gluten for certain time but then try it again to see if there are any symptoms of allergy. Don't boycott gluten completely. Instead keep trying (like try wheat after every three months) and look for symptoms for intolerance) as your body keeps going through many changes internally. But people suffering from celiac disease have to avoid it completely. Those who are opting for a gluten free diet for weight loss, should know that it's not advisable. Following this diet means eliminating a large number of foods and this kind of practice may lead to some deficiency."

Loved by celebs like Victoria Beckham and Gwyneth Paltrow, this one is not recommended as a weight loss measure. Experts tell you why...

Pros

If you have a celiac disease, one may have inflammation or damage to the intestinal tract. Eating gluten free can help reverse these problems.

This diet will push you to eat more fruits and vegetables which is healthy. Also, it will introduce you to new grains like quinoa, buckwheat, etc which are normally not a part of our regular diet.

Cons of a gluten free diet

People opting for gluten free diet for weight loss should keep one thing in mind that gluten free products mostly are high in sugar and fat content. This diet lacks the required amount of fibre and some essential nutrients like vitamin B12 (for vegans and vegetarians)



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Gwyneth Paltrow