

# January 2012

## Health Topic

Sturgeon Bay United Methodist Church  
Carol Moellenberndt, parish nurse

### What is a Gluten-free Diet? Is it right for me?

I don't know about you but I have heard more and more about gluten-free products and foods. I have heard stories from people about how they feel so much better on a gluten-free diet and then I look at the prices in the grocery store and do a double take!

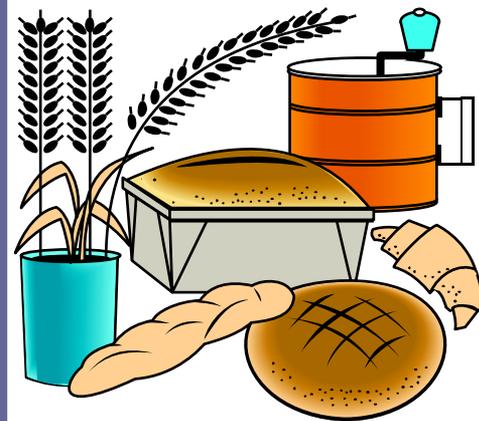
So what is a gluten-free diet and how do I know if it is the right thing for me to try?

According to the Mayo Clinic intolerance of a protein called "gluten" is the basis of a disease called "Celiac disease". This disease involves an immune reaction in the person's small intestine which causes damage to the inner surface of the small intestine and an inability to absorb certain nutrients. The symptoms of Celiac disease of abdominal pain and diarrhea come from the damage to the small intestine. Other symptoms such as generalized weakness, fatigue, osteoporosis, weight loss, mouth sores, anemia, neuropathy in hands and feet and stunted growth in children, can be related to the inability to absorb certain nutrients. The symptoms of Celiac disease can mimic other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, gastric ulcers and Crohn's disease.

How do the doctors test for the disease? First of all when you visit your doctor he/she will ask you many questions about diet and your symptoms. It is helpful to keep a food diary and a diary of any symptoms you are having. Be sure to tell your doctor about all medications, all vitamins, and all supplements you are taking. A blood test can be done to test for antibodies involved in the disease. Be sure to keep gluten in your diet (wheat/ grain products) for the blood test. The doctor may need to use an endoscope to get a small sample of the small intestine for the diagnosis.

People who are diagnosed with Celiac disease need to keep a strict diet to control their symptoms - there is no cure for the disease. Foods to avoid include wheat, barley, rye, spelt and triticale. It can be difficult to avoid all gluten as it is added to many processed foods. Working with a dietitian is helpful. Some people need to take certain vitamin supplements also. Certain flours can be used in a gluten-free diet, these are amaranth, arrowroot, buckwheat and corn. Different cooking techniques help to make similar products such as bread and muffins. Come and sample a few at our cooking class on Saturday January 28th from 10am - 12noon.

So, although gluten-free diet is becoming more popular not too many people actually have Celiac disease. There are other food allergies and intolerances which can sometimes be discovered by doing an "elimination diet". This type of diet should be done only under the supervision of a doctor because when you eliminate things from your diet you may need to



"One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes  
from the mouth of the Lord."  
Deuteronomy 8:3b

#### Health News Notes

- **Parish Nurse hours** 10am-2pm Thursdays. **Blood Pressure check** on January 8th after services.
- **Parkinson Support Group** Thursday January 5th 1pm View DVD "My Father, My Brother and Me" about genetics and Parkinson Disease
- **Gluten Free program and cooking class** Gina Newton, dietitian from Ministry Door County Medical Center will talk about the Gluten Free diet and then we will cook and taste some different gluten free grain foods. Saturday January 28th from 10am - 12noon in the fellowship hall and kitchen.
- **CPR-AED class** The full class for those who have not had CPR before and those for whom it has been over 2 years. Tuesday February 28th from 10am - 2pm, lunch included. Contact Carol for registration form. The church will cover the cost of the class and we will share books.

substitute other things so that it does not affect your health. Carbohydrates are an important part of our diet and help us with our basic energy needs. In a healthy diet carbohydrates make up 45% to 65% of the diet. Breads and grains which have gluten provide many of those carbohydrates. So be careful in diagnosing yourself with needing a gluten-free diet. Talk with a health professional and dietitian for the best results. **We do not live by bread alone - but gluten is not usually the source of our problems!**  
**Happy Eating!**

Come and  
sample some  
gluten-free  
products at our  
Health Program/  
Cooking Class  
on January 28th  
at 10am in  
Fellowship Hall.