

Gluten and Dairy Free Living Workshop Details and Tips

Background

Gluten is a mixture of proteins that are found in Wheat products and other grains like it. This list includes Durum, emmer, spelt, farina, farro, wheat and einkorn, rye, barley and triticale. It is prized for holding shape in dough, allowing its elasticity as it's being molded.

For many people, especially those with the autoimmune disorder Celiac disease, there's a range of intolerance to eating gluten products that shows itself in symptoms affecting the digestive system. For Celiacs, it causes the body to attack its own small intestine villi, small fingerlike projections that promote nutrient absorption. However it is hereditary, estimated to affect 1 out of 100 people worldwide, many undiagnosed. For Non-Celiac sensitivities, people experience "foggy mind", increased depression, ADHD-like behavior, abdominal pain, bloating, headaches, diarrhea, constipation, bone or joint pain and chronic fatigue. Though common in Celiac Disease symptoms, it doesn't necessarily mean a person tests positive for Celiac or having a wheat allergy. (<https://celiac.org/non-celiac-gluten-sensitivity/>)

Like how Gluten and Wheat can cause separate types of intolerances, the same is applied to Dairy. The proteins in milk, like casein, are not tolerated in some people while lactose intolerance is specifically to the sugars (lactose) found in milk. Lactose intolerance isn't an allergic reaction; rather, it's the inability to process the sugars due to a lack/low level of necessary enzymes to process the sugar. Symptoms for lactose intolerance are diarrhea, bloating and discomfort. (<http://www.allergyuk.org/common-food-intolerances/dairy-intolerance>)

Learning Objectives Expanded

It's important to allow people their own sense of agency when they begin creating more food goods from scratch in order to best accommodate a shift in diet. Nut milks are incredibly important substitutes because of their high nutritional content. Calcium may be lacking as a result and would have to be supplemented to avoid deficiencies that dairy free living will potentially cause. One milk that's beneficial to make is Hemp Milk, which naturally contains calcium, as well as chia seeds, sesame seeds and almonds.

(<http://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-health/10-dairy-free-foods-packed-with-calcium/>)

Other Concerns

Found in a recent study by the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 41% of processed grains, seeds and flours that are inherently gluten-free, like quinoa, are contaminated with enough gluten to cause disruption and health problems to those with gluten-intolerance. This is a major issue that leads to concerns that the Gluten-Free Society states that avoiding packaged processed foods claiming to be gluten-free because of the lack of knowledge of where manufacturers put into their products.

(<https://www.glutenfreesociety.org/packaged-food-high-risk-for-cross-contamination-of-gluten/>)

Tips:

When compiling a list of things to do for your workshop, make sure you are knowledgeable about the content matter before doing it. No one is expecting you to be the expert but knowing enough to give insightful advice to questions is always a strong indicator that you're someone worth listening. Be honest and clear about your intentions and what you aim to accomplish to your participants. They will need context to help them frame the information you're about to share with them and it will guide their thoughts. Interject with questions to the audience themselves once in a while in order to reengage them and keep them more inclined to focus on what you're saying so that they can form their own answers or questions.

Because this workshop is food related, it's very helpful to have samples for people to eat as you tell them about what they're eating. Most people learn by doing and by listening. Only listening is very hard for most people, especially in an environment where they're wandering through the festival of workshops and stations looking for something interesting to involve themselves. They're already pretty distracted so you'll want to make sure you're memorable to them after they leave the event. Even if your presentation isn't about food, having food to give always interests people enough to extend courtesy to stay and listen.