

# WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is a protein naturally found in **wheat, barley and rye and other grains**. Since it has binding and adhesive properties, it is also used commercially in many products, both edible and non-edible. It can be extracted, concentrated and added to food and other products to add texture and flavor. Gluten can trigger an adverse inflammatory and autoimmune response in some people. The spectrum of conditions include Celiac Disease, Non-Celiac Gluten sensitivity, Dermatitis Herpiformis (affecting the skin) and a wheat allergy.

## Why do some people react to gluten?

It is believed that more people are reacting to gluten due to the way food is **grown and processed**. Wheat grains have been altered to make them more resistant to drought. People are eating more wheat/grain based products now than say 100 or 200 years ago. Along with this, Gluten is added to many products that are not necessarily wheat based such as sweets, chips, sauces, meats and so on. Other research leans toward to factors such as our **gut microbe** being in a state of dysbiosis. It is known that things like antibiotics weaken our gut flora and immunity, making us more susceptible to food allergies and illness.

# KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

It is important to know the difference first of all between an allergy, an intolerance and an autoimmune disease.

An **allergy** is something that adversely affects you within a few minutes of eating something you are allergic to. Take for example shellfish, peanuts or wheat. In this instance, the person will experience an array of symptoms such as: hives, a rash around the mouth, itchy skin, difficulty breathing and even anaphylactic shock.

An **intolerance** or sensitivity means that your digestive system reacts to some food but no autoimmune reaction is taking place. Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity falls into this category.

An **autoimmune condition** like Celiac Disease is when your body's own immune system attacks itself as in the case of ingesting gluten and damages the lining of your gut. Celiac Disease is also a hereditary genetic condition.