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It's a Jungle Out There

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Gluten-Free Survival:

It's a Jungle Out There

If you are gluten free (or avoiding any other foods), you know the trials and tribulations of surviving vacations, lunch meetings, date nights, family gatherings, and dining out. And that's on top of your daily routine and visiting your local grocery store. Every work meeting, social engagement, and walk down the street is filled with evil temptations disguised as innocent baked goods. There seem to be cafes and bakeries sprouting up everywhere just to beckon you to come in and take a bite.

It's easy to begin to feel like a martyr if you are truly committed to the gluten-free cause. At the very least, you start to think you can relate to the temptations faced by Adam and Eve. But not even the Garden of Eden could have been this challenging...

Being gluten free isn't for everyone. But for those of us who feel a ton better avoiding that devilish little protein, it's more than worth it. We have found the key to better health and it shouldn't be taken for granted. It's more than most people have.

I have been gluten free for 20 years and I've spent my career at the IBS Treatment Center helping people solve digestive problems by identifying and avoiding their trigger foods.

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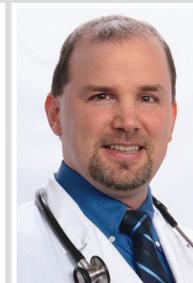
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Dr. Stephen Wangen



Dr. Dorian Holmes



Dr. Ken Pentland



Dr. Safina Aulakh



Gluten-Free Survival: *It's a Jungle Out There, continued*

I've noticed that there are very specific factors that set apart those who successfully survive a gluten-free lifestyle from those who don't.

Survival is the key word here. Understand that your new eating strategy is for your survival because it will improve your health. If you start to fall apart and panic, then you're doomed. In the words of the Alderleaf Wilderness College, "you need to be able to think clearly, navigate safely, satisfy your need for food, and signal for help."

Exactly. That is spot on, and it is worth rereading. Whether you are surviving in the wilderness or surviving gluten free on the streets of America, it's the same set of issues.

You must have the mindset that there will be constant challenges to your mission. If you go into this thinking you can't do it, you will fail. So many times I've heard people say, "I can't possibly live like this." However, that never deters me from helping them get to a point where they can do it.

What helps my clients change their attitudes? It's my confidence that they can actually avoid gluten. I do it, and I've seen thousands of people do it. If they can do it, then you can do it, too. I can look you in the eye and tell you it is completely possible to avoid gluten. But, you have to start with a positive attitude, because your mindset is your number one survival tool. Your attitude is what will get you through the challenges and help you walk past the sinfully delicious cafe display.

To have a good attitude, remember to PEA. (And yes, to pee as well! That helps too.) PEA stands for:
Plan - **E**xecute - **A**ssess

Like any good survivalist, your first plan is to be prepared. You must be prepared for daily living, for social engagements, and for travels.

The foundation of your gluten-free diet is established at home. Learn how to satisfy your dietary needs by preparing gluten-free foods for every meal. This may take some time to sort out at first, but it is certainly doable if you put your mind to it.

Don't leave the house hungry. You'll be more likely to make a mistake with your diet if you put yourself in a situation where you're hungry and desperate for anything to fill the void.

Always plan ahead when you're going into social situations. Will you eat ahead of time? Will you take a dish with you? Will you volunteer to organize the social engagement so you can choose somewhere you are comfortable eating?

Most places nowadays can prepare something gluten free for you. Be grateful for that because it wasn't the case when I started out 20 years ago. Relax knowing you can still enjoy social time and stay healthy as well.

Traveling is somewhat similar to social engagements, except you need a long-term plan. How will you sustain yourself for hours or days at a time? Will you take snacks with you? Do you know your route so you can plan to stop at suitable places along the way? It's also a good idea to allow time for a little grocery shopping once you arrive at your destination, and fit in a visit to the local health food store if you can.

A really helpful planning tool for this is the Find Me Gluten Free app that you can get on your phone. This app will help you locate gluten-free food sources anywhere in the United States. And if you're traveling out of the country, visit the Gluten Free Passport website. They have a plethora of resources, including more apps.

Remember, all the choices are up to you. Although you will continue to bump into gluten-eating zombies everywhere you go (and many will want you to join their tribe), you'll have confidence knowing you are prepared to survive because you have the skills to execute them. Er... execute your plan, I meant.



Gluten-Free Survival: It's a Jungle Out There, continued

Once you execute your plan, it's time to assess it. Did it work for you? Do you need to make any adjustments? Nothing has to be perfect the first time out and I assure you that you will make mistakes. Everyone does. But you will assess your mistakes and learn from them. Your gluten-free survival skills will continue to greatly improve with your vast experience in a gluten-full jungle.

Having a positive attitude and remembering to PEA will make all the difference in the world. And believe me, people will begin to admire your knowledge and your attitude and will start to ask for your advice—because you are a true survivalist.

Be safe out there!

Disclaimer: The character in this story represents a combination of true stories taken from several patients. Our clients generally experience significant improvement in their digestive health, but individual results may vary

Welcome Dr. Safina Aulakh!

Dr. Safina Aulakh hails from Canada and is a state licensed and board certified doctor with a degree in Naturopathic Medicine. She was previously a clinic supervisor for resident doctors at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine, and has done additional skills training through Harvard Medical School. She also holds a degree in Biology, and has done continued education specializing in neuroscience at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Aulakh is the mother of two girls and enjoys working with patients of all ages. She has a personal history with digestive problems as well as migraine headaches, and has discovered how her food allergies/intolerances play a vital role in allowing her to control these issues.

In her spare time she enjoys the company of family and friends, cooking, reading and further educating herself on health related issues. Dr. Aulakh also speaks French, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. She looks forward to working with you and is practicing at our Santa Monica office. You can schedule an appointment with her by calling 310-319-1500.

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As seen on:



Meet Our Founder, Dr. Stephen Wangen

May 5th, Support Group Meeting at 7pm @ Office
<http://www.meetup.com/NE-Seattle-Gluten-Free-Food-Allergy-and-IBS-Support-Group>

May 19th, Santa Monica support group. 6:15pm @ Santa Monica office. Call 310-319-1500 for more information.