

GUT INSTINCT

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FOOD INTOLERANCE & A FOOD ALLERGY?

The simplest way to explain the difference is a food intolerance involves the interaction between the food and the digestive system, whilst a food allergy involves the immune system. Both can lead to similar symptoms hence why the terms are often confused.



FOOD INTOLERANCE is a broad term used to describe a range of adverse reactions to certain foods. Symptoms may include stomach pain, bloating, diarrhoea, headache and flatulence. These symptoms can have an impact on one's health and wellbeing, but are not life-threatening.

Food intolerances are common and caused by not being able to digest certain foods properly due to an interaction with the gut flora, having a sensitivity to food additives, or having irritable bowel syndrome.

There is currently no cure for food intolerances. The best way to avoid symptoms of a food intolerance is to avoid certain foods or eat them less often and in smaller amounts. People can also take supplements to aid digestion.

The following foods account for 90% of food allergies

- wheat
- milk
- peanuts
- fish
- tree nuts
- soy
- shellfish
- sesame seeds
- eggs
- lupin

A legume that is used in lupin flour, often found in gluten-free pasta

A FOOD ALLERGY on the other hand, is more serious and can be life-threatening. Even eating small amounts of the offending food can trigger a severe reaction.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction varies from person to person and can occur within seconds or minutes after eating the food.

Symptoms can include diarrhoea, stomach cramps, nausea, headache, hives or rashes, swelling of the tongue or airways, shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, hay-fever symptoms, low blood pressure that can cause dizziness or fainting.

WHERE DOES COELIAC DISEASE FIT?



Coeliac disease is neither an intolerance or an allergy. It is an autoimmune disease where the body's immune system attacks itself when gluten is eaten. This causes inflammation and damage to the lining of the small bowel and consequently, the body cannot properly absorb nutrients from food.

People are born with a genetic predisposition to develop Coeliac disease. There is no cure however, a strict gluten-free diet does allow Coeliac disease to be managed effectively. If left untreated, there are long-term health complications including osteoporosis, infertility, miscarriage, depression, liver disease and an increased risk of autoimmune disease and some cancers (although this is rare).

DO YOU HAVE A FIRST DEGREE RELATIVE WITH COELIAC DISEASE ?

As there's a strong genetic link with Coeliac disease, if you have an immediate family member with the disease, it is important you are screened, This applies even if you have no symptoms.

Knowing whether you have Coeliac disease is important because if you do, it is crucial you stick to a gluten-free diet and be assessed for possible complications. Coeliac disease can be managed well, but only if you know you have it.

COELIAC FRIENDLY FESTIVE FOODS

The festive season is upon us, so we wanted to share a couple of our favourite gluten-free sweet treats that you can enjoy with friends and family over the holiday period.

BERRY PAVLOVA



INGREDIENTS -

- 6 egg whites at room temp.
- 1 1/4 cup caster sugar
- 2 tsp white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 300ml thickened cream
- Mixed berries
- Icing sugar to dust

METHOD -

- Pre-heat oven to 120 degrees celcius & line an oven tray with baking paper.
- Whisk the egg whites with an electric beater in a clean, dry bowl until stiff peaks form.
- Gradually add the sugar a tablespoon at a time mixing constantly, till all the sugar has dissolved.
- Fold in the vinegar and vanilla essence.
- Using a spatula, place the mixture on the baking paper in a 20cm mound
- Bake for 1.5 hours then allow to rest with the oven door ajar, till it has cooled.
- Whip the cream, adding a few drops of vanilla essence. Add the cream on top of the pavlova. It doesn't need to be neat as the berries sit better if it hasn't been evened out on top.
- Place berries on the cream, add a mint leaf for decoration if you like & dust with icing sugar.

HEALTHY COCOA BAUBLES

INGREDIENTS -

- 12 pitted dates
- fresh orange juice
- 1 cup almond meal
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1.2 cup cacao or cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
- a pinch of sea salt
- good quality chocolate & sprinkles for decoration

METHOD -

- Soak the dates in a small bowl of orange juice for 30 mins
- Add dates and all other ingredients into a food processor and blend till combined
- Wet hands and roll into bite-sized balls
- Using a teaspoon, drizzle melted chocolate on top & pop on some sprinkles
- Store in the fridge till ready to eat