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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

### A SERVICE FOR LIFE-SPAN PROVIDERS

Greetings,

We should add another chronic medical condition to our list of high risk chronically ill patients requiring routine screening for the presence of gluten sensitivity and celiac disease:

**1) All chronic, severe headache sufferers not responding to conventional therapies especially if associated with balance problems or unsteadiness (see abstract below)**

The other 14 high risk candidates include:

- 2) All patients with chronic neurological conditions of unknown cause (primarily ataxias & peripheral neuropathies)
- 3) All IDDM patients
- 4) All 1st degree family members of IDDM patients
- 5) All 1st degree family members of celiac patient
- 6) All patients with autoimmune thyroid disease (Hashimoto's and Grave's disease)
- 7) All cases of iron deficiency anemia of unknown cause
- 8) All cases of abnormal liver enzymes of unknown cause
- 9) All patients with Down's syndrome
- 10) All patients with Turner's syndrome
- 11) All women with history of recurring pregnancies with poor outcomes (miscarriages, premature birth, low birth weights)
- 12) All children of short stature of unknown cause
- 13) All patients with personal or family histories of intestinal lymphomas or esophageal carcinomas
- 14) All patients with epilepsy associated with occipital calcifications or personal history of hyperactivity, migraine-like headaches &/or GI symptomatology, poorly responsive to conventional therapies
- 15a) All osteoporotics & osteopenics unresponsive to conventional therapies
- 15b) All patients with history of recurring low impact fractures

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## Wheat Protein [gluten] Can Trigger Severe Headaches

NEW YORK (Reuters Health--Feb 12, 2001) - According to the results of a small new study, some people may experience migraine headaches due to an otherwise harmless culprit: wheat.

The investigators found that limiting gluten--a protein found in wheat and other grains--reduced symptoms of severe headache in seven out of nine patients.

The patients were all found to have a sensitivity to gluten, which results in a heightened immune responsiveness triggered by the protein, according to the report published in the February, 2001 issue of Neurology.

Gluten sensitivity can include celiac disease, an inherited inability to digest gluten that results in abdominal distention, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle wasting and lethargy. Other conditions can also develop, including neurological problems or dermatitis herpetiformis--blister-like lesions on the elbows, buttocks and knees, the report indicates. The only treatment is strict avoidance of certain foods.

In the new study, Dr. Marios Hadjivassiliou, from the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield, UK, and colleagues looked at 10 patients who had a long history of headaches that had recently worsened or became resistant to treatment. Many of the patients also had a lack of balance or unsteadiness.

*Tests showed that these patients had a sensitivity to gluten, and magnetic resonance imaging scans suggested they had inflammation in the central nervous system.*

*Nine of the 10 patients tried a gluten-free diet, and seven stopped having headaches. Two other patients had some--but not complete--success by switching to a gluten-free diet. One patient did not follow the diet.*

*“If the results of the current study are confirmed, removal of the trigger factor by the early introduction of gluten-free diet may be a promising therapeutic intervention,” Hadjivassiliou and colleagues write.*

*“Further studies of the effect of gluten-free diet are needed to confirm these preliminary findings,” the researchers conclude.*

*SOURCE: Neurology 2001; volume 56: pages 385-388.*

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