

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue patterned off-the-shoulder top and white shorts, is crouching on a sandy beach. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows the ocean waves and a clear blue sky.

# *Beyond* GLUTEN

*A Healing  
Transition*

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Foreword by  
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## MAKING THE GLUTEN FREE TRANSITION

**By Sandi Star, HHP, CNC and Author of Beyond Gluten - A Healing Transition and Founder of Sandi Star Wellness.**

An excerpt from Sandi Star's book *Beyond Gluten – A Healing Transition* walks you through healthy steps in going gluten free.

**Do a reality check.** Remember, this is a choice you have to commit to. If you want to feel lousy for the rest of your life and potentially get worse as time goes on, that's your choice—but I wouldn't recommend it for many reasons. The goal is 100 percent. Yes, it is a process, but the ultimate goal is to be 100 percent free of gluten and any other food allergens and intolerances. This is the only way your body will heal, so let's start the healing journey!

Did you know that, as we mentioned earlier, once the gluten intolerant body is exposed to the tiniest amount of gluten it sets off your B cells, which causes an inflammatory response that can take several months to calm down? That's why the goal is 100 percent. For some food intolerances, such as eggs, for example, you would want to wait at least three to six months then bring them back in and retest to see how the body responds. This is a sensitive experiment, so please work with someone who specializes in this area. As far as gluten, based on what I know and have seen, there is no reason to *ever* go back to eating wheat.

**Give it time.** Healing takes time. I've been on my gluten free journey for more than ten years now, and I have to say I have never purposely eaten gluten but I can sure tell when I get cross-contamination. I'm one of those people who is all in—100 percent—once I make up my mind on something. I guess if you have been seriously ill for a while like I was, you will do what it takes to be healthy again. For some, that's not the case; it takes many tries to get there and that's okay, as long as the long-term goal is always in mind. If you are better with shorter-term goal setting, do a sixty-day challenge. Within this time frame you will notice the brain fog getting better. Your body will start adjusting to a healthy weight. In most cases, you will lose the bloating and weight around your middle, as it is typically linked to dysbiosis (overgrowth of harmful bacteria).

One of my patients who has celiac disease was overweight by at least forty pounds. She carried most of the extra weight in her midsection. She was only about twenty years old at the time and was having skin rashes, dizzy spells, and nausea. We got her off gluten and within a few months she was a new person. She lost all the extra weight and her skin cleared up. She had no more dizzy spells and now looks amazing! She is committed and can definitely tell when her body gets cross-contaminated with gluten.

Don't be discouraged if it takes a little longer than expected to feel 100 percent. Think of peeling that onion one layer at a time. That's the journey to wellness I tell my patients about continually. A general rule is: for every year you deal with a health issue, it takes at least a month to start healing. Because everyone is unique, it could take longer for you or it could happen a lot sooner than you think: for example, I spoke with a woman who lost seventy pounds in just a few months after going gluten free and has kept it off for years. And I had one patient who went off gluten and his headaches went away immediately! However, it happens for you, it's worth it! For me, it took a while because I had so many layers to work through. But I will say, I was seeing a lot better and my eyes started healing within a few months. When I went back to the eye doctor he was blown

away at the difference and asked what I had done. I told him I went off gluten for starters! You should have seen the confused look in his eyes. That was the beginning of my amazing journey.

**Keep a food journal.** You may need to keep a food journal for a week or two if you don't have one already. It doesn't have to be time consuming. A one-page journal example is included at the end of this book—or you can download one of many different journaling apps on your smart phone or do it online. When working with my patients, I find reviewing their journals to be a very useful tool. The key is to keep track of what you're eating and how you feel, which is especially important for those who do not get food intolerance panels done. Journaling helps you stay in tune with what you put in our body on a daily basis. It also helps identify the foods that work for you and that offer optimal healing—I call these the medicine foods. We tie emotions into the journals because anxiety is often related to food sensitivity. To take your journal to another level, include environmental influences such as mold exposure, seasonal flare ups, body care products, cleaning products, etc. This is part of a home revamp which we will talk about below.

**Stick to whole foods to heal the gut.** We have options depending on how much inflammation is going on in the gut and, quite honestly, how fast we want to heal. I suggest you drop bakery goods as well as all processed foods and sugar for a while to allow your gut to heal. Eating cooked foods in addition to drinking a quality bone broth is very healing to the gut. This helps calm things down when we are inflamed. A lot of raw foods are awesome but the body has to work hard at digesting them—which isn't a bad thing, unless you have some inflammation going on in the gut. So, take it easy on raw foods for a while. The Recipes section has some good recipes that use functional ingredients. Treat yourself to exotic organic dark chocolate that is GF. Look for 70 percent or higher. Dark chocolate is full of antioxidants. The darker the chocolate, the less sugar. Keep in mind that chocolate is on the cross-reactive list, in case you have a reaction to it. Some raw treats such as kale chips are a much better choice than potato chips or crackers. I will say when I give into chips I opt for the non-GMO ones that are either baked or cooked in coconut oil. Be on the lookout for healthy meals on your current menus or the menus of friends and family that are naturally gluten free—roasted chicken (without seasoning), baked sweet potatoes and steamed veggies, for example—and make them a staple on your new menus. Surf the internet, watch cooking shows, and browse magazines for ideas you can adapt as you see fit. Karmic Health ([www.karmic-health.com](http://www.karmic-health.com)) has a great resource and links page with a list of gluten free food companies, blogs, and recipe sites under Holistic Resources. We also have a recipe page.

**Go through your pantry and refrigerator at home.** Make a list of foods and meals already in your diet that are gluten free. Be sure to list condiments, produce, snacks, and other foods. This list will be helpful as you create menus around your new restrictions, and will give you encouragement that you're already on the right track and have choices! We have a great video under the Media page on [www.karmic-health.com](http://www.karmic-health.com) with yours truly talking about optimal foods.

At the same time, clear out all foods that have gluten, wheat, wheat flour, oats, oat flour, rye, semolina, or modified food starch as an ingredient. If in doubt, throw it away. If you have family members living with you who will not go gluten free, you might consider giving the offending edibles to them to be put in another part of the house while you learn to live and think gluten free. This step becomes *very* important if you are dealing with celiac disease. With that being said, your toaster can be a problem if you are sharing it with someone who is not gluten free. They do have toaster bags you can purchase to protect your gluten free bread. I personally don't have gluten in my house—it's just my husband and myself, which is obviously a lot easier than having a large family. Do what you can to protect yourself. The same goes for pots and pans and utensils. More on this in the cross-contamination section.

The goal is to cook for the entire family without using gluten. Most of the time they won't be able to tell the difference—and they may be surprised they actually like gluten free, healthy meals. They will feel better and the taste might pleasantly surprise them. Ideally, the whole family will join you on this journey from the beginning—at the least at home. We can't always control how they'll eat outside the house. In most cases, once everyone understands the importance of going gluten free and its potential for healing, they will be on board. I don't have any gluten or cow dairy in my house and my husband is fine with it—not to mention a lot healthier because of it. He does have his cheats occasionally, but he does pay for it with a swollen belly.

Give yourself permission to eat things you may have restricted from your diet before your diagnosis, as long as you are not experiencing inflammation. Tortilla chips or cookies may not be appropriate for some people, but they are a treat in a GF diet—in small doses, of course. This becomes important with children. As soon as you can get comfortable, opt for healthier snacks. The Recipes section includes some great treats for both kids and adults, as well as a list of wonderful recipe blogs you can find on the internet. The sooner you can get to using functional ingredients, the more quickly you will heal. I see a lot of people in social media groups posting their gluten free food options, but honestly, a lot of those may be unhealthy and full of other inflammatory ingredients. Be careful.

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