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EATING HEALTHY IF YOU HAVE FOOD ALLERGIES

* Those with **food allergies or food sensitivities might worry that eliminating healthy foods from their diet** due to their allergies **might also mean eliminating nutrients required for over-all good health.** With careful choices and some new products, eating healthy with food allergies or sensitivities is now easier.

* **Fish Allergy?** Nutritionists all agree **Omega-3 fatty acids** have multiple health benefits including regulating erratic heartbeats, lowering bad cholesterol, lowering blood pressure and generally preventing heart disease. Some nutritionists believe a diet rich in these nutrients is also beneficial to good vision and good mental health.

* Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for good health but the **body doesn't produce them; they have to be obtained through our diet.** There are 3 types and sources of these acids: EPA, DHA and ALA. Both DHA and EPA are found in fatty fish like salmon, sardines, mackerel & trout and are easily absorbed by the body. BUT if you have an allergy to fish or fish products, this causes a problem getting this form of the nutrient. ALA, not as potent a source of Omega-3 but still good, is found in flaxseed, canola oil, walnuts and leafy green vegetables - a problem if you have allergy to tree nuts.

* Many foods, including some types of bread, milk, margarine, yogurt, eggs, wheat germ and soy beverages either contain these fatty acids naturally or are fortified with Omega-3. **Read labels carefully** on these enriched products; **sometimes the source for Omega-3 fortification is fish oils,** a problem if you have allergies to fish or seafood.

* A **generally safe way to add some Omega-3 fatty acid** to your diet is to add some ground flaxseed to your yogurt or baked goods (you can find flaxseed on your grocery aisle where flours are sold), or even sprinkle some on your salad. A glass of soy milk with ground flaxseed is another good choice – if not allergic to soy. Substitute canola oil for vegetable oils and add soybeans or tofu along with leafy green veggies (spinach, kale, etc) to your next stir-fry for an added Omega-3 boost – if you're not allergic to soy. As always, **ask your physician about these changes to your diet if you have food allergies.**

* **Allergic to eggs?** There are some *substitutes for cooking or baking recipes calling for an egg:* 1) Ener-G Egg Replacer, available online at www.ener-g.com; 2) or 1/4 cup mashed banana replaces 1 egg in a recipe or 3) 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed mixed with 3 tablespoons of water – let sit till it thickens before adding to your recipe or use 4) ¼ cup “beaten” silken tofu or 5) combine 1 tablespoon canola or olive oil, 1 tablespoon of water and 1 teaspoon of baking powder. Caution: **some egg-substitute products contain egg.** Read labels carefully.

* **Wheat allergy? Celiac Disease** is a condition where the body cannot absorb or digest certain proteins called gluten; in fact, for a patient with Celiac Disease, **gluten might be toxic. Gluten is found in most grain products** – wheat, rye and barley. Anyone with Celiac Disease or an allergy to gluten must follow a gluten-free diet to be free of serious disease symptoms including chronic fatigue, weight-loss, bloating and gas, diarrhea, constipation or anemia.

* Anyone with Celiac Disease knows that shopping and cooking is a major undertaking to remain symptom free because **gluten is found in foods other than breads.** It can be found in some dried fruits, meat marinades and flavorings, vegetarian meat substitutes, deli meats, hot dogs, imitation seafood products, baked beans, seasoned nuts, flavored tofu, malted milk, cheese sauces and spreads, buckwheat products, some cereals, seasoned or flavored rice mixes, icing and frosting, chocolate bars and candy, flavored teas and coffees, herbal teas, non-dairy beverages, ciders, beer, ale, cocoa drinks, some potato chips, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, malt vinegar, commercial soups and broths, even some ice creams.

* Many nutritionists believe uncontaminated oats are safe for a Celiac patient – but **always ask your physician before adding these to your diet.** Fortunately, labeling laws make it easier to know if a product does contain gluten – it just takes time to read the nutrition panels. Since **1 American out of 133 can have Celiac Disease,** many stores are now carrying Gluten-Free items. There are also many websites which sell gluten-free foods allowing those with Celiac Disease to enjoy a varied and healthy diet. For more information, ask AAFA-TX, or for a list of digestive disease organizations, refer to <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/resources/patient.htm>

IN THE NEWS:

* Immediate injection of epinephrine (adrenaline) can save the life of anyone with any severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). Many have a biphasic or secondary reaction requiring a second shot of epinephrine. A new preference study indicated 80% of patients preferred carrying one Twinject auto-injector to safeguard against anaphylaxis rather than two single-dose injectors. The Twinject has been enhanced for easier use; refer to www.twinjecttraining.com.

Upcoming Free AAFA-TX Programs: 1) **June 8** – “Asthma Management and Education” a CE program for nurses, School Nurse Institute, Waco. Pre-registration required. 2) **June 9** – “Asthma & allergy Essentials for Childcare Providers” Kids R Kids, Houston, Sarah Nelson, instructor. 3) **Asthma Camps within Texas:** June 10-15, 17-22, San Antonio; June 19-22, San Angelo; July 8-13, Houston; Aug. 5-10, Dallas. 4) **June 20** – “Tools To Manage Asthma & Allergies” a Worksite Wellness Program, Blockbuster Corporate, Dallas, Dr. Eric Schmitt, presenting. 5) **June 27** – “Tools To Manage Asthma & Allergies” a Worksite Wellness Program, Blockbuster Corporate, McKinney, Dr. John Meiser, presenting. For more information, contact AAFA-TX

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