

Health Reflections

Grains and G.A.P.S.



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“Do you know what breakfast cereal is made of? It's made of all those little curly wooden shavings you find in pencil sharpeners!”

Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Presumably you've already heard me talk about preparing grain-free breakfasts, lunchboxes and family meals. No, I am not scared of choking on little curly wooden shavings, and I'm not against any food group per se. But it breaks my heart to see so many people living on so-called 'health' foods that are harmful to them personally.

Yes, this subject can be confusing. You may have read yesterday's corporate news article on the health benefits of cereals, and another that focused on saving money by cooking up cheap carbohydrates such as pasta. At the same time, other authentic voices, independent of mainstream dogma (and funding) advise the opposite.

Who is to be believed, you may ask!? Where should we start on the quest to nourish our families? How about starting with the individual, his immediate family and their current health needs? We could also start from a shared understanding that processed foods are rarely ideal.

What are grains? Grains derive from a plant family of grasses. Folklore reports wheat, barley and rye as introduced by a mythological sow called Henwen...but you decide on that one! Tradition also suggests a historic appreciation of grains as a symbol of fertility, yet our current estranged relationship with the land and her plants seems to coincide with higher incidences of infertility, hay fever and gluten intolerance. As complex as the causes may be, it's apt to reflect on how harming mother earth is synonymous with harming ourselves. Forcing high gluten strains from depleted soils, and employing biocides as matter of agricultural course has turned modern grains into something quite unpalatable - and myth into tragedy.

How are grains digested? When we eat heavy carbohydrates, the body uses them as simple sugars. In response, blood-sugar levels spike then plummet, especially in the absence of natural fats and especially after processed carbohydrates e.g. flour, cereal bars, sausages, crackers and some commercial baby foods. By feeding our families these innocent looking sources of energy, we encourage a rollercoaster effect in blood-sugar and insulin levels, and risk inducing inflammation. Enter GAPS.

Inflammation (even low grade) and chronic insulin problems may hold open doors for conditions such as diabetes¹, thyroid disorders² and heart disease³. Infections and sunburn may be quicker to take hold, and arthritis aggravated.⁴ Also, no child in my clinic enjoys post-grain meltdowns or spaciness, so common in GAPS kids. Leaky guts allow gluten to breach healthy confines, and astute teachers notice behaviour changes after wheaty dinners.

Long, long ago In days before central heating or freezers, it may have been wise to prepare for winter by fattening up on autumn fruit and harvested grains. Wheat and mills also played a key role in the boom in industrial towns, providing workforces with a relatively cheap source of food. But surely it's a mistake for us to continue reaching for processed carbs daily, with no regards for seasons, not least because of new problems in the human gut.

Allopathic drugs, despite some life-saving attributes, can damage the gut's microbiome (think antibiotics for starters). The same goes for generational traumas, academic pressures and work-related stress. Such a compromised state invites overgrowth of pathogenic gut microbes such as candida, which thrive on grains and sugars. They send craving signals, to which we often give in with a wheaty snack. Sadly, such food is often laden with roundup (a serious antibiotic that happens to kill good gut microbes).

Mr Ceiliog The Welsh love reminiscing about the day Mr Kellogg first used a *ceiliog* (cockerel) as his cereal logo. But that's no reason to reach for a product that was, after all, marketed by a man who was also interested in lowering male libido. Let's leave that old choice of breakfast in the past, and focus instead on increasing real health with wholesome lifestyle choices. Boiled eggs, anyone?

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK ♥ READ BEFORE YOU THINK*

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: Roald Dahl (George Allen & Unwin, 1964);

¹*Prevent and Cure Diabetes: Dr Sarah Myhil (Hammersmith Health Books, 2016);*

²*Hashimoto's Protocol: Isabella Wendtz (Harper One, 2017);*

³*A Statin Free Life: Dr Aseem Malhotra (Yellow Kite, 2021);*

Nourished Beginnings Baby Food: Renee Kohley (Page Street Publishing Co, 2016);

Diabetic Cookery: Rebecca Wolff Oppenheimer (E. P. Dutton & Company, 1917);

⁴*Gut and Physiology Syndrome: Natasha Campbell-McBride (Medinform Publishing, 2020).*

*Fran Lebowitz - Social Studies

Making Way for Health

You may have been told that cereal is *grrreat* for you. You may have been spoonfed a lifetime of snappy cartoons and grown-up excuses (in granola form) for having pudding for breakfast.

You may have been paying an extra pound for the neutral hues of organic packaging and may truly, wholeheartedly believe that this is what nourishment means, and that milk is milk (what else could it be?) and a spoonful of sugar just...normal.

Pop goes the toaster. How long now till coffee break and a NSAID or two? Till the rollercoaster stops for someone to be sick? Till a new dawn wipes clean the menu; irons out addictions; makes way for health?

EA

So, what's for breakfast? ★ Boiled eggs ★ Glass of homemade kefir ★ Bacon, mushrooms & tomato ★ Blackberry smoothie with lemonbalm, kombucha & good quality coconut cream ★ Mug of stock (tasty, frugal, top gut healer) ★ Chicken drumstick with sauerkraut ★ Bulletproof coffee (enjoy with a spoonful of ghee or cacao butter) ★ Mug of stock ★ Fresh fruit smoothie (300ml coconut milk, frozen berries, vanilla and a teeny-weeny touch of honey) ★ Chicken liver pate on apple slices ★ Homemade egg custard (300ml organic coconut milk, 4 eggs, vanilla, just a smijeon of honey, bake until just browned) ★ Chia-cocoa-raspberry pudding ★ Haddock or kippers ★ Stewed berries with raw soured cream and a couple of dates ★ Fish pate on cucumber slices ★ Mug of stock ★ Mint-choc-smoothie (raw milk or yogurt, plain cocoa powder, avocado and fresh mint leaves) ★ Mug of stock ★ PK bread with ghee ★ Onions and eggs sauteed in local beef tallow ★ Did I mention a mug of stock? ★ Full fat yogurt, nuts & seeds ★ Enjoy!

AM I A GAPSter? G.A.P.S. stands for *Gut and Psychology Syndrome* and *Gut and Physiology Syndrome*. If you have ever taken **any of the drugs listed below**, then what can I say but...welcome to the ever-increasing, worldwide 'club' of GAPSters, ripe for healing. The composition of your gut biome (and therefore your hormonal balance, neurotransmitters and immune system in general) is likely to have been influenced by these:

- ★ antibiotics, at any point in your life;
- ★ steroid inhaler, at any point in your life;
- ★ steroid injection, including before birth;
- ★ steroid cream, even small amounts long ago;
- ★ the contraceptive patch or pill or implant, at any point in your life or in your mother or grandmother's life;
- ★ IVF or HRT or antihistamines;
- ★ contact with pesticides or insecticides in the garden, in the park, on public footpaths or on non-organic grains;
- ★ contact with sheep dip or organophosphates;
- ★ antacids or antidepressants or statins, or indeed most drugs listed in Susan Cohen's *Drug Muggers*.

Nearly every patient consulting with me over the last two decades has been a GAPSter, often without realising it. Their presenting complaints almost always reflect a damaged microbiome, with symptoms ranging from arthritis and allergies to autistic spectrum disorders, from fertility issues and ADHD to celiac disease, from diabetes to eczema to obesity, and from depression to weak immunity – and more. For a detailed explanation I recommend reading *Gut and Physiology Syndrome*, authored by one of my teachers, Dr Natasha Campbell-McBride.

THE GOOD NEWS! We can aim to mitigate this unintended harm, *as well as improve the next generation's microbial heritage* by means of 1) Homeopathic Detox, 2) GAPS diet and 3) Bolstering natural immunity.

We know that masking symptoms with drugs doesn't equate to cure, and I sense an increasing desire to address *root causes* of illness. With this holistic outlook comes a shift in attitude towards healthcare in general, where we can't simply run to specialists without also playing our own part in the health partnership. It's as if we're rethinking an outdated sense of hierarchy here, and embracing opportunities to reclaim a portion of our responsibility. It may not be the easiest path, but it's an empowering one.

If and when we go to a GP, herbalist, homeopath or acupuncturist, it makes sense to complement their treatment by choosing the most nourishing and least inflammatory foods affordable. Following on, how good would it then be to step out of our own kitchens and help improve menus in nurseries, food banks and work canteens?

GAPSters (i.e. most of us) do best without grains and with gut-healing options including stocks, friendly fats and food from roundup-free soils. Let's help each other to do this.



Each Health Reflections article and blog has been written for those who wish to learn about the true meaning of health, who desire to think broadly and who are ready to take responsibility for their own personal choices. All information shared is of educational nature and should not replace medical advice. No guarantees are made regarding accuracy or completeness of content, or its applicability to any condition or personal circumstance. If you choose to implement any of the ideas or principles described, you are taking full responsibility for your actions. In times of illness, seek professional healthcare.

AUDE SAPERE – MENTRA WYBOD – DARE TO GET IT

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