



The Doctor & the Chef Teach Gluten-Free Cooking Classes at NCNM

By: National College of Natural Medicine

April 11, 2013 —If Miley Cyrus, Bill Clinton and Oprah are going gluten-free, you can bet gluten-free diets have reached a level of attention that goes beyond trendiness. The fact is that more people are becoming interested in gluten-free diets. And gluten-free foods have become a billion-dollar industry. For two leading experts in the field of gluten-free lifestyles, Dr. Lisa Shaver and Chef Kimi Reid, teaching others about gluten-free diets is a personal and professional mission. Together they are offering a series of 90-minute, gluten-free cooking classes, "[Gluten-Free Eats with the Doctor and the Chef](#)" on the first Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. in Charlee's Kitchen, the National College of Natural Medicine's new teaching kitchen in Southwest Portland.

For naturopathic physicians, celiac gluten-intolerance and non-celiac gluten sensitivity are not trends or even new concepts—they're just two of the many complex food-associated diseases that they study in medical school. Lisa Shaver, ND, LAc, is a Portland primary care physician whose clinical practice focuses on gastrointestinal disorders and gluten-related non-digestive disorders. Chef Kimi Reid, whose culinary expertise has ranged from stints in Michelin five-star restaurants to private yachts in Italy, now consults locally and creates recipe plans for clients that are easy, inexpensive and accessible. They are partnering in offering cooking classes that mix cooking skills with nutritional education about gluten-free diets, an approach that is lively and fun for cooks of all levels of proficiency.

Gluten, a protein found in some grains, including wheat, rye, barley and spelt, is used as an additive in many processed foods. Studies have documented that celiac disease—a condition in which the intestinal walls are damaged as a result of eating gluten—affects one in every 133 people. Researchers now believe that non-celiac gluten sensitivity, which has a wide range of symptoms, affects as many as 10% of the U.S. population—and is on the rise.

Shaver, who teaches at NCNM and lectures at medical conferences on celiac disease, is a gluten-free advocate who also manages the Portland chapter of the Gluten Intolerance Group, a support group held at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center.

While Shaver strongly recommends being tested before trying a gluten-free diet, she adds that for people with gluten sensitivity, gluten-free diets can produce dramatic results. "Cooking one's own food might be the most important step toward health a person can make," Shaver says. "Symptoms of gluten-insensitivity—digestive distress, migraines, rashes, brain fog—will subside for most people just by eliminating gluten from the diet."

She adds that eating gluten-free means more than replacing foods with gluten-free packaged equivalents. "That type of diet won't allow someone to thrive because most of those foods are nutrient deficient," she says.

"The foods we use in our classes are nutrient-rich. Fresh, whole foods are naturally gluten-free. The entire produce section? Gluten-free, naturally! Once you head into the aisles with canned, boxed, jarred and frozen packaged food, you're venturing into areas filled with hidden sources of gluten," Shaver notes.

She says that food producers are required to label wheat because it's an allergen. But they're not required to label gluten. "There can be traces of gluten in an unlabeled package, especially if it came from barley, or a derivative of barley, or other gluten-containing grains."

She adds, "So why not learn to cook for yourself and make luscious, naturally gluten-free foods, instead of relying on packages and processed foods with labels that require careful scrutiny?"

"Because we've become accustomed to the convenience of fast food, Americans have developed an unhealthy aversion to cooking." Shaver adds that she regularly observes the health benefits of gluten-free diets in people who successfully make the switch.

"I've seen what my patients report to me as miracles. Migraines for 10 years—gone. Lifelong eczema—gone. Extreme gastrointestinal pain—gone," she says. "We want to help people find the joy of cooking and eating fresh, good food—to begin helping them nourish their bodies on a cellular level."

To register or learn more about "**Gluten-Free Eats with the Doctor & the Chef**," visit NCNM's Community Classes at www.ncnm.edu/gluten-free. To learn about NCNM's "**Food as Medicine Everyday**" classes or other NCNM cooking and nutrition classes, visit www.ncnm.edu/charlees-kitchen.