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Rheumatology (Oxford). 2001 Oct;40(10):1175-9.

## **A vegan diet free of gluten improves the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis: the effects on arthritis correlate with a reduction in antibodies to food antigens.**

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### **Abstract**

**OBJECTIVE:** Whether food intake can modify the course of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an issue of continued scientific and public interest. However, data from controlled clinical trials are sparse. We thus decided to study the clinical effects of a vegan diet free of gluten in RA and to quantify the levels of antibodies to key food antigens not present in the vegan diet.

**METHODS:** Sixty-six patients with active RA were randomized to either a vegan diet free of gluten (38 patients) or a well-balanced non-vegan diet (28 patients) for 1 yr. All patients were instructed and followed-up in the same manner. They were analysed at baseline and after 3, 6 and 12 months, according to the response criteria of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). Furthermore, levels of antibodies against gliadin and beta-lactoglobulin were assessed and radiographs of the hands and feet were performed.

**RESULTS:** Twenty-two patients in the vegan group and 25 patients in the non-vegan diet group completed 9 months or more on the diet regimens. Of these diet completers, 40.5% (nine patients) in the vegan group fulfilled the ACR20 improvement criteria compared with 4% (one patient) in the non-vegan group. Corresponding figures for the intention to treat populations were 34.3 and 3.8%, respectively. The immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibody levels against gliadin and beta-lactoglobulin decreased in the responder subgroup in the vegan diet-treated patients, but not in the other analysed groups. No retardation of radiological destruction was apparent in any of the groups.

**CONCLUSION:** The data provide evidence that dietary modification may be of clinical benefit for certain RA patients, and that this benefit may be related to a reduction in immunoreactivity to food antigens eliminated by the change in diet.

### **Comment in**

[A vegan diet changes the intestinal flora.](#) [Rheumatology (Oxford). 2002]

PMID: 11600749 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE] [Free full text](#)

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## **Publication Types, MeSH Terms, Substances**

### **Publication Types**

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