

Hello and welcome to English practice for healthcare.

I'm Helena and I'm an English language teacher and a registered nurse. I have experience of working in different areas of healthcare in the UK and I love talking to people about their health. I believe it brings up lots of useful examples of English that can't be found in textbooks.

This is the fifth episode of my podcast to help you improve your vocabulary, your listening skills and general confidence with your English understanding.

If you are a healthcare professional working in English as a second language or studying towards this goal, you will hopefully find this podcast a beneficial study tool. However, please keep in mind that this is not a source of medical advice and it's not intended to be used for you to make any medical decisions.

Ok let's get started!

Do you know what type of disease Coeliac disease is?

Or do you know anyone who is gluten intolerant?

This episode is a conversation with Mark. Mark is 40 years old and in the last few years he has found out he has a mild intolerance to gluten. We talk about how he discovered this, how he finds following a gluten-free diet and how gluten affects him. There's also quite a lot of talk about beer. Can you predict why beer might come up in our conversation?

So, Mark isn't coeliac and he doesn't have an allergy.

Depending on how much you know about gluten intolerance and the differences between coeliac disease and having a wheat allergy you may wish to do some research on these conditions.

I have put a link in the episode description to the website for Coeliac UK, which is a charity that provides lots of useful information and uses clear, easy to understand English.

This is an area of health where using the correct language and labels for conditions is very important. Patients such as Mark are increasingly being referred to as suffering with non-coeliac gluten sensitivity. This is because these are two distinct conditions.

In non-coeliac gluten sensitivity, similar symptoms to coeliac are experienced when gluten is consumed.

However, unlike Coeliac disease it is not an auto-immune illness. In autoimmune conditions the immune system attacks its own healthy cells. In the case of coeliac disease this is in response to gluten and the response damages the cells in the lining of the patient's gut. The only treatment is not to eat gluten.

Something to listen out for: in the beginning of the first half, I ask Mark if he has an accent. You will hear him make a comment about the English the King speaks. Does Mark think he speaks in a similar way to the King?

In the UK we sometimes refer to a style of speaking as the Queens English. Another term for this is RP, which stands for Received Pronunciation. It used to be that news broadcasters in England could only use this style of language. Nowadays, you can hear a bit more variation in accents when you listen to the news.

Ok, some questions to help you with your listening for detail skills:

Number 1, in the past, Mark was a Policeman. How long was he a policeman for?

Number 2, see if you can list all the foods in the first half that Mark mentions are made with gluten.

And a question to help you with your ability to listen and understand more general meanings:

Mark mentions a few things that are negative about trying to follow a gluten free diet. Is it true or false that Mark says the higher cost of being gluten free is the most negative thing about it. If its false, why is it false?

Finally, if you are using the transcript to read while you listen (remember this can be found for free on my website, www.englishpracticeforhealthcare.com) you will see I've have used the UK spelling of coeliac. In other countries they don't include an o before the e in the first syllable.

Ok, I'll stop talking now so we can hear from Mark, ok, here we go!

OK. Hi, Mark

Hello

Um where are you from?

I'm from Sheffield in England

Ok, what part of England is that?

It's in the North

The North of England

In Yorkshire

In Yorkshire

And do you have an accent?

I think so, yeah. So I'm told

(Laughs) more than me, I'm actually from Sheffield as well, but I don't really have much of an accent compared to you

Yeah, I don't think that the King speaks like this.

(laughs) Well, thank you for um agreeing to chat to me so, well, just tell me first what what do you do for work?

I am a health and safety manager for a civil engineering company

Ah, OK, Is that busy? Is that a busy job

It depends what we're doing at the time. We we we dig foundations for houses, roads, sewers, deep drainage, things like that and then people build houses on top of them

OK so quite important then, but before that you were what was your job before that?

I've done a few things. I've been a Brewer, I've been um I've worked in security in the Middle East, and I've also been a police officer

(oh yeah, i forgot about that) And how long were you a police officer again?

10 years

Yeah, wow, wow, OK, and but this job less stressful than being a policeman?

Um yeah eah. I mean it depends

Or some days

What day of the week it is, yeah, some days it is, some days it isn't um I think there's different types of stress in every job

Mmm mm very true

OK, so I want to ask you about being gluten free

OK

So you live a gluten free life, is that?

Um I try to, um but it's very hard and because I am more I have a mild intolerance to gluten rather than being completely allergic to gluten or coeliac

Yeah

As some people would be so I try and avoid gluten when I can, but sometimes I just have gluten because its easy and it's everywhere

a lot of people are intolerant to gluten without knowing it

Yeah

Um I don't think necessarily the human body's designed to ingest as much gluten as what we do.

Mmm yeah, so you said it's it's difficult to be gluten free why, why is that? What's difficult about it?

Um because it's in a lot of the the staple foods that we eat on a day-to-day basis, so um gluten tends to occur in grains um so it's in barley um and that is the thing that we make bread from we make beer from um It can be in seasoning packets that you season your meat with um it uh all anything that's made with flour, with the exception of of of some of the grains, corn, oats I don't think naturally have gluten in them, but even if you mill a grain somewhere with another grain, you get the cross contamination. So, if you mill oats and mill barley in the same mill

Yeah

You're gonna get cross contamination

Yeah

So yeah, it's it's in a lot of food stuffs, drinks sometimes

No and I and apparently the body can develop um an intolerance to gluten

Ohh

So I might not have had an intolerance 20 years ago or not a noticeable intolerance like I said a lot of people are without knowing it but um the intolerance has obviously become worse my body's become more sensitive um to to gluten um so so yeah uh it's it's something that's developed over time

Yeah, I I went to the doctor just because I had sort of general fatigue, tiredness, physically, mentally, um I I wasn't as sharp as I used to be um and a lot of, sort of bloating, digestive discomfort, that sort of thing nothing sort of serious, but enough to make me go to the the doctor's for the energy mainly it was the energy side of things I felt, so sort of well, fatigued and weak and so that's why I went and that's when he told me that I should probably try cutting out gluten

Right, right. So did he say that pretty early on was it?

It was after blood tests

Oh ok

He said look, I've, I've looked at your blood tests everything's fine but I would suggest maybe watching how much gluten you consume and try

Ahhh

Because he didn't tell me I had to cut gluten out completely

OK, yeah

Um but he said you've got an intolerance to gluten and if you cut that out I think your body will have more energy.

Hmm.

Maybe it's just something we shouldn't have, but we do because to be fair, it makes so many good things

Yeah

That we eat on a daily basis

Cakes

Maybe we shouldn't do; cakes, buns, bread I mean, breads amazing isn't it I mean, I love bread

And I still eat bread probably more than I should do

Yeah

It also comes into uh fresh bread, doesn't tend to affect me as as processed like

Yeah

The the, the sealed white loaf I wouldn't feel great after that but if I go and get some fresh sourdough from the bakery then I've It doesn't really make me feel that bad

Hmm mm

And I don't know if that's to do with sort of it's freshness or something

Mm mm

But yeah, it's hard to stay away. Beers pretty bad that affects me quite a lot, so I don't drink that that much anymore I tend to drink cider instead, made from fruit, doesn't have the gluten

Yeah, yeah. I don't think many people would know that if you're gluten free, you can't like you have yeah, that beer as you said before drinks contain it its um so where did you go? Did you get much information at at that appointment with the doctor about changes?

Yeah he gave me some handouts he told me

Yeah

Where to look online and that's when I really started looking into it because at the time I had a brewery, so that was my main job I was around gluten every day

Right

I was carrying sac.. 25 kilo sacks of barley around and making beer from 150 kilos of barley every time and so I'm making a drink that actually I shouldn't even be drinking myself
Yeah

Everyday um drinking a lot of it

Yeah, well, testing

Testing, quality control and and and and yeah, I think that's that's sort of possibly what brought it on the bodies sort of rejecting something that you're having too much of

Yeah, so it's your body saying well I I can, I can have this much gluten I can have 10% um of gluten in your overall diet but now you're going to 15, 20% global in your overall diet maybe you need to cut it down a little bit It's your body's way of rejecting an increase in what your taking

So did you, but you can get gluten free beer can't you

Yeah, I mean I used to make gluten free beer but the most popular types of well the most popular gluten free beers you actually make a beer with gluten and you use a chemical com some sort of magic, magic liquid I don't know, I don't know exactly how they how you use it but its um its an addition that you put into the beer that breaks the gluten down

Mm mm

Um and gluten the they sort of measure it in in parts per million. So if your beer is below a certain amount of parts per million, it's classed as gluten free you can use um an addition to the beer, a liquid addition that breaks the gluten down to bring it below the threshold. So you're still using gluten to start with, whereas the other less popular way of doing it, mainly because of it's expense, is you make a beer out of grains that don't contain gluten

Mm

Um things like sorghum um which is quite popular in Africa you grow it a lot in Africa uh but you don't really get it here so it becomes very expensive

Right

To produce beers out of those sorts of grains. Corn is another one, so you increase the corn addition. A lot of sort of Spanish beers contain rice as part of their their their grain bill if you like and so they've reduced the amount of barley that they got in there

Yes

They've increased the amount of rice um but again, the reason that beer is traditionally made from Barley is because Barley is the best thing to make beer from

And the taste

And the taste and everything else if you if you made a beer out of 100% sorghum, it probably tastes terrible you wouldn't do it

Mm mm

You've also got to it comes down to how you extract the sugars from different types of grain. Barley is a really simple grain to extract sugars from which go towards your you beer taste the amount of alcohol content all the things like that

Mm mm

Um so yeah

Um so, but you said about cost, so are gluten free options of other things as well. Foods. Drinks. Are they more expensive?

Usually, yeah, because you've got an extra um sort of an extra part of the process

Mmm mm

Um and and people need to for example, the the stuff I used to to buy to put in the beer that I made I think a litre of that was about £150 If you compared it to a litre of lemonade, that costs you about a pound It's quite an inexpensive, liquid, by year by quantity um so actually yeah, it does make quite considerable increase in the cost

Mm

Umm again, if you tried to make beer out of things that don't contain gluten, you're importing it normally I looked into importing sorghum from Africa um and It was ridiculously expensive and you probably have a lower quality product at the end of it as well

So since trying to follow a gluten free diet has, do you think like so your costs have gone up. So obviously the cost if you're making a gluten free beer it will be more expensive to make but I mean you and your day- to-day life

Yeah

It's been a bit more expensive so its

Yeah, a little bit um It's more the narrowing of your options

Yeah

So a lot of places still don't have the gluten free options um It's kind of it's on me to know what

Yeah

What's got the gluten in what hasn't we're quite blessed in Sheffield there's a lot of breweries that, a lot of which are turning out gluten free options using the chemical addition method um but there are gluten free beers out there It's just I know what they are

Yeah

A lot of people maybe don't but the information is available out there

Mmm mm and food wise then well yeah, I suppose you touched on it earlier if you have to buy like fresh bread, that's more expensive than...

Yeah, yeah it is, there are gluten free breads there rubbish. I don't think I've come across a gluten free bread that is um um

Close

Comparable

Yeah to it's the same with pasta um gluten free pasta is not as good as

Umm so yeah, it makes it, it narrows your choice. It makes it harder to just go and pick something up

Yeah

Break

Ok, first half.

A useful piece of vocabulary that came up there was 'cross-contamination'. This was when Mark discussed the issues in food production when gluten is found in non-gluten foods. This can happen if foods are produced in the same factory. Cross contamination can also occur in healthcare. For example, to avoid cross-contamination of any harmful bacteria between patients we wash our hands before and after any contact.

So, question number one, Mark used to be a police officer officer

And how long were you a police officer again?

10 years

So that was for 10 years.

Secondly, Mark mentioned pasta, bread, buns, and cakes as examples of gluten containing foods. A bun in the UK is a small, individual sponge cake, which sometimes has icing on the top.

And the third question, true, or false, Mark says the cost of being gluten free is the most negative thing?

This was false because although Mark mentioned that the cost of being gluten free is a bit higher he felt it was more an issue of your options being narrowed and that he needs to be aware of what his options are himself

So since trying to follow a gluten free diet has, do you think like so your costs have gone up. So obviously the cost if you're making a gluten free beer it will be more expensive to make but I mean you and your day- to-day life

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In the second half, Mark talks about how other people with non-coeliac gluten sensitivity can use social media to share their knowledge of where to find good quality gluten free products.

I also ask Mark a bit more about his symptoms. Can you notice how I ask Mark if he suffers with either diarrhoea or constipation without actually using these words?

Try and listen out for his other symptoms too.

And for you personally, because obviously everyone will be different um if you have gluten, how long do you suffer afterwards?

Um I think it kind of depends on what the source of the gluten is a lot of the time and it could be a few days

Really

Of just feeling really fatigued and tired um

Lethargic

Yeah, just lethargic, yeah, yeah, definitely um there there the main symptoms that affect me

Hmm mm

I know other people are who'll have more sort of digestive issues with it and stuff, but for me it is the energy um and that feeling of um sort of fatigue and tiredness

Yeah, and like..

Lethargy

So like digestive issues, do you mean like going to the toilet? Is it harder or no, the opposite?

It's it's I mean it's more discomfort

Yeah

Being bloated

Right

It doesn't affect me in in that way so much

Mm mm

It just makes you feel more uncomfortable

Mm mm

Just like um low level pain

Yeah

But but nothing that that I say it affects different people in different ways but that's not as big of an issue for me

17:14 so you mentioned to me the other day about being in a Facebook group have you found that like online in terms of getting information have you found anything you could recommend to anyone who is gluten free or wants to recommend to their patients who are gluten free, where to look

I mean its purely selfish cause the group I've joined is a fish and chip shop group cos I love fish and chips actually, if I had to give up fish and chips instead of, I mean I'd give up beer before I gave up fish and chips, but obviously the batter contains gluten, and with the type of meal fish and chips is anyway quite heavy

Yeah

Quite like it the gluten free alternatives out there, it's quite important that you know where to go now I still do eat fish and chips fish and chips that have gluten in them, but where I can I take I go to the gluten free ones but again, like every everything else um some are better than others, so the Facebook group I've joined is uh gluten free fish and chip shops in the United Kingdom or something its called

Right, yeah, yeah, the official

But there are quite, the official, there are quite a lot of Facebook groups um surrounding gluten free and I think the Coeliac Society

Ah yeah ok

Have quite a prominent Facebook page. I think that's what their called umm

Mm Coeliac Society yeah is a is a charity so they also offer some advice about being gluten free (ah that's good)

Yeah, yeah they've got I'd see that pop up on Facebook quite a lot. And I think I probably I follow the page but there are a lot of things where people around the country like say the the one that I use a lot is the Fish and chip shop one, there's so many different options around the country that people have put on there to say, if you go to this place you can get gluten free fish and chips here, you can get it here, you get it here and there are similar groups for other things as well so I I don't doubt there's a bakery one where you can get

Yeah

Gluten free cakes and bread and stuff that are really good, but you have to rely on um the sort of tips from other people

Yeah, yeah

Because a lot of the time it's easy to get it wrong, and you just have something that you would rather not have not eaten in the first place just because its gluten free doesn't mean its good

Mm mm so yeah, so the gluten free community, you look out for each other

That's it

To still be able to enjoy delicious treats

Keelings in Barnsley, fish and chip shop. Shout out

There you go

That's my favorite

They are really good. Just 5 minutes from junction 37 of the M1

Thank you for that tip

Ian, Ian, he's coeliac himself you see

Ohhhh ah right

He's had the fish and chip shop for a long time but he's coeliac

He understands

So, he cooks great, its literally, it's better than normal fish and chips what he produces

21: 48 Uh have you ever kept a food diary? Were you ever told to keep a food diary?

I was probably told to but I don't I I and I mean yeah nah I don't keep anything like that

Some people find it helps

Yeah, definitely cos you can keep track of what you are and aren't

Mmm

I think I've always worked in jobs sometimes where you think ah I've not eaten for so many hours I've just gotta eat the nearest thing

Yeah

And you kind of prepare to know that some things are gonna make you feel worse than others. But I just need to get some food inside me because I'm on the road a lot

Yeah

And I should maybe be better about making food before I go to work but I'm not so

Yeah, you easier said than done isn't it

Yeah

Well, thank you for helping raise awareness of being gluten free

It's quite alright

Thank you Mark

Thank you

Bye

Bye

Ok, perfect. So, Mark gave the example of using Facebook to find out where to get the best Fish and Chips. Fish and Chips is a very popular dish in the UK, and you can find a photo of it on my website that goes with this episode.

Mark mentioned the lack of energy so symptoms of feeling fatigued and lethargic that he experiences this if he eats gluten. He also experiences digestive discomfort but not constipation or diarrhoea.

Yeah, just lethargic, yeah, yeah, definitely um there there the main symptoms that affect me

Hmm mm

I know other people are who'll have more sort of digestive issues with it and stuff, but for me it is the energy um and that feeling of um sort of fatigue and tiredness

Yeah, and like..

Lethargy

So like digestive issues, do you mean like going to the toilet? Is it harder or no, the opposite?

With constipation it's harder to go to the toilet and the frequency decreases. With diarrhoea you can need to go to the toilet very frequently and it can be urgent, which is the opposite to having constipation.

So, this conversation with Mark has again drawn attention to how the same medical issues can affect people in different ways and we need to use our communication skills to find out about individual symptoms.

Lovely, so thank you again to Mark for sharing his health experience with us and thank you to you uh for listening, thank you. Please do email me if you have any questions about English from today's or any other episodes its helena@englishpracticeforhealthcare.com and if you like the podcast then please rate it on Spotify or apple podcasts if you are listening from these platforms. The next episode should be out in around two weeks. Ok, so enjoy your English practice, and thanks again I'll speak to you soon bye, bye