

THE CELIAC SOCIETY OF INDIA PRESENTS

# GRAIN MATTERS



March 2026  
ISSUE 02 / VOLUME 06



## THE VANISHING POLYP

A 59-Year-Old's  
Nutritional Turnaround.

pg. 1

## HIDDEN HUNGER

A hidden nutritional crisis  
affecting millions even  
those who appear healthy.

pg. 2

## WHAT'S COOKIN'?

Recipes for gluten-free  
living, curated by the  
Celiac Society of India

pg. 8

# EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

India today stands at an interesting nutritional crossroads. While we have achieved remarkable progress in food availability, a quieter challenge continues to affect millions- hidden hunger. People may consume enough calories yet remain deficient in essential micronutrients such as iron, vitamin D, magnesium, and vitamin B12. One contributing factor is the shrinking diversity of our diets, as traditional grains like ragi, bajra and jowar have gradually been replaced by refined wheat and polished rice.

In this issue of Grain Matters, we share insights from a pilot study conducted by the Celiac Society of India, in collaboration with the National Association of the Blind, New Delhi, AIIMS Delhi, and supported by Illness to Wellness. The study explored whether reintroducing millets into regular meals- alongside appropriate supplementation- could help improve micronutrient status and overall wellbeing. The findings highlight that when diverse foods and targeted nutrition work together, the body may respond better to recovery and health restoration.

Clinical experience echoes this. One patient, severely underweight after major colon surgery, regained strength and nearly 10 kilograms on a structured gluten-free nutritional plan. Months later, during evaluation for a second surgery, doctors were unable to locate a previously detected rectal polyp.

Millets are not a miracle cure- but they remind us that food diversity, traditional grains, and thoughtful nutrition remain powerful allies in healing and long-term health.

*Ishi*  
Ishi Khosla

# SPECIAL NOTE

from Chairperson, Illness to Wellness Foundation



Dear Reader,

It is a privilege to share this message as we continue our collective journey towards better health through awareness and informed choices. The Illness to Wellness Foundation values its partnership with the Celiac Society of India and takes great pride in supporting its mission.

Today, there is growing recognition that good health begins in the gut, influencing immunity, metabolism, and overall wellbeing. While modern science continues to validate these connections, our traditional wisdom has long emphasised the importance of balanced digestion and mindful eating. As awareness of conditions such as celiac disease increases, the need for early diagnosis, responsible dietary management, and informed choices becomes even more important. At the same time, promoting balance and diversity in nutrition remains essential for the wider population.

We are deeply appreciative of the Society's dedicated work over the past two decades in advancing awareness on celiac diseases. Its sustained efforts in supporting individuals, empowering families, and building a strong, informed community are truly commendable.

At Illness to Wellness, we believe that healthcare must begin with awareness and prevention, and we remain committed to supporting initiatives that enable healthier, more informed living.

Warm regards,  
Anil Rajput,  
Chairperson, Advisory Council,  
Illness to Wellness Foundation



# THE VANISHING POLYP

## A 59-Year-Old's Nutritional Turnaround.

When Garima (name changed) first walked into our clinic, the physical toll of her medical history was visible. At 5'3" and weighing just 42 kg, she was severely underweight and struggling with profound weakness. Her medical journey had been arduous; in 2025, she underwent complex surgeries to remove her gallbladder and a significant portion of her colon.

Beyond the surgical recovery, her body was in a state of high alert. She suffered from thyrotoxicosis, fatty liver, and chronic digestive distress, including hyperacidity and frequent infections. Her blood work confirmed the crisis: high inflammatory markers, microcytic anemia, and critical depletions of Vitamin D and Magnesium. This physical exhaustion was mirrored by emotional challenges, characterized by forgetfulness and deep depression.

The most pressing concern was a large rectal polyp that surgeons had been unable to remove during her initial colon surgery due to its size and the complexity of the procedure. She was scheduled for a second surgery to address it, but her body was too weak to undergo another operation immediately.

Our intervention was not a medical treatment, but a

foundational shift in her "Grain Pattern." Although not diagnosed with Celiac disease, we recognized that gluten, along with other grain components like Amylase Trypsin Inhibitors (ATIs) and lectins, were likely fueling her internal inflammation. We transitioned her to a strictly gluten-free, anti-inflammatory dietary plan supported by targeted micronutrients. The goal was simple: reduce the

### THE CHALLENGE:

59 yo patient, 42 kg, post-colon surgery with a persistent large rectal polyp.

### THE CHANGE:

Strategic elimination of Wheat ATIs and Gluten.

### THE TRIUMPH:

+10 kg weight gain and spontaneous disappearance of the polyp.  
Surgery avoided.



systemic "fire" in her gut and allow her body to finally absorb the nutrition it desperately needed. Within three months, the shift was undeniable. Her energy returned, and she gained 10 kg, reaching a much healthier weight. However, the true revelation occurred during her pre-surgery evaluation in August. As doctors prepared to locate and remove

the large rectal polyp, they were met with a medical surprise: the polyp had disappeared. Subsequent colonoscopy reports confirmed a healthy, clear colon. While traditional medicine often views diet solely as a preventative tool, Garima's case suggests that the right nutritional environment can empower the body to resolve even significant existing pathologies.

## NUTRITION INSIGHT



# HIDDEN HUNGER

A hidden nutritional crisis affecting millions even those who appear healthy.

India has made enormous progress in producing enough food for its people. Yet a quieter problem continues to affect millions: hidden hunger. Hidden hunger does not always show up as an empty plate. It happens when people eat enough calories but don't get enough essential vitamins and minerals like iron, vitamin D, and vitamin B12. This can lead to tiredness, fatigue,

weaker bones, reduced attention, poor immunity and anaemia even in people who appear otherwise healthy.

A recent pilot study conducted by Celiac Society of India in collaboration with National Association of the Blind, New Delhi and AIIMS Delhi, supported by Illness to Wellness explored an important question- can bringing

traditional grains like millets back into daily meals help improve micronutrient status alongside standard supplements?

During the green revolution, India focused heavily on high-yield crops such as rice and wheat. This was crucial for food security. However, over time, traditional grains such as millets, which were once widely consumed, gradually disappeared from many plates. Millets such as ragi (finger millet), bajra (pearl millet), jowar (sorghum) are naturally rich in fibre, iron, B-vitamins, and compounds that support overall health. When diets become heavily dependent on refined wheat and polished rice, dietary diversity shrinks. Over time, this can lead to micronutrient deficiencies. Even today, a large proportion of adults have low vitamin D levels, despite abundant sunlight. Vitamin B12 deficiency is common, especially among vegetarians. Iron deficiency affects a significant number of women across life stages. These deficiencies are not limited to rural or underprivileged communities. They are seen in urban and institutional settings as well. Hence, this pilot study is important- it looked at adults living in a residential institution, who were otherwise “apparently healthy”.

The problem with gluten: Wheat contains gluten, a protein that gives dough its elasticity. For most people, gluten is not harmful. However, some individuals have gluten intolerance or celiac disease who are required to follow a gluten-free diet. Excessive reliance on wheat-based products reduces grain diversity. Highly refined wheat products often lack and micronutrients. Millets are naturally gluten-free, making them suitable for people who cannot tolerate gluten. More importantly, they add variety and fibre back into the diet. Fibre plays an interesting role- it supports gut health, which in turn can influence how well the body absorbs nutrients. While this study did not directly measure gut bacteria, this is an area of growing scientific interest.

This study was conducted over two months at the National Association of the Blind in Delhi with 54 adult residents. Everyone received vitamin D, vitamin B12, and multivitamin supplements, but one group also had part of their regular wheat-based meals replaced with millet dishes. Blood tests were taken before and after the 60-day period to check key nutrient levels. The researchers then compared the two groups to see whether adding millets to daily meals offered any added benefit beyond supplements alone.

When the results came in after two months of the intervention, they told a story that was both encouraging

**54 participants**  
took part in the study at a residential institution

**60 days**  
was enough to show measurable nutritional improvement

**2 groups**  
were compared — diet + supplements vs supplements alone

**Vitamin D improved**  
across all participants receiving supplementation

**Better results observed**  
in participants consuming millet-based meals

**B12 levels increased**  
despite millets not being a direct source

**Haemoglobin improved**  
especially among women in the millet group

**Improved quality of life**  
was reported by participants post intervention

and thought-provoking: Vitamin D levels improved clearly among participants. This was reassuring, because vitamin D deficiency is very common in India. Since everyone was given supplements, this shows that when deficiencies are identified and treated properly, the body responds well. But there was also a subtle takeaway: those whose regular meals included millets appeared to show slightly stronger improvements, especially women. Millets are not naturally a source of vitamin D. Instead, the finding hints at something bigger- that when good food and supplements go hand in hand, the body may respond better.

## Did You Know?

- Hidden hunger can exist even in people who eat enough calories
- You can look healthy but still be nutrient deficient
- Fatigue and poor immunity are often linked to micronutrient gaps
- Gut health plays a key role in nutrient absorption

A similar trend was seen with vitamin B12. Again, the supplements played the main role in raising levels. But those eating millet-based meals showed a somewhat greater rise. Millets are not a source of B12, so this wasn't about the grain itself providing the vitamin. Rather, it suggests that improving overall diet quality- adding fibre, variety, and traditional foods- may create a healthier internal environment where nutrients are better utilized. Sometimes it's not just what we take, but the overall pattern of eating that makes a difference.

There were no dramatic shifts in iron levels over just two months, which is not surprising- building iron stores take time. However, haemoglobin, a marker of

blood health, improved among many of the women who were eating millet-based meals. This suggests that while changes may not happen overnight, steady dietary improvements can start nudging the body in the right direction.

In addition to the changes seen in biochemical markers, it is important to highlight what participants themselves reported at the end of the study. Those in the intervention group shared that they experienced an overall improvement in their quality of life. They reported reduced hair fall, better mood, more regular menstrual cycles, improved strength, and better satiety.

Taken together, this study doesn't suggest that millets are a miracle cure. Supplements clearly played a major role in correcting deficiencies. But the broader message is encouraging- when traditional grains are brought back into daily meals, they may quietly support the body's ability to recover and rebuild. Millets appear to offer supportive benefits when included as part of a structured meal plan. They increase dietary diversity, provide fibre and essential minerals, and may help create a food environment that supports better overall nutrition. It's a reminder that food and nutrients work best as partners- not in isolation, but as part of a balanced, thoughtful diet.

**diet played a critical role  
in recovery**

**food patterns influenced  
health outcomes**

**participants experienced  
real-life improvements**

**created measurable health  
impact in just 60 days**

***"Millets are not a miracle cure, but they are a reminder that food and nutrients work best as partners not in isolation."***

# EATING OUT & TRAVEL GUIDE

Eating out and travelling can be enjoyable experiences, but restaurant foods often contain hidden ingredients that may not align with specific dietary restrictions. Many dishes include ingredients such as wheat flour, soy, corn products, or additives used in sauces, batters, and thickeners.

## COMMON FOODS THAT MAY CONTAIN TRIGGER INGREDIENTS

*Different cuisines often include ingredients that may not be suitable. Below are some common examples to watch out for when eating out.*

### South Indian:

Avoid Rava Idli and Rava Dosa (Semolina/Suji). Be cautious of Sambhar, which is often tempered with Hing (Asafoetida) containing wheat flour.

### North Indian:

Skip Sarson ka Saag and Makki Roti if they are thickened with corn flour. Avoid the flour-based shells of Samosas.

### Street Foods:

Stay clear of Papri, Bhel (with papri pieces), and Samosa shells, all typically made with maida or wheat flour.

### Chinese & Japanese:

Avoid Soy Sauce, Tamari, and Miso (Soy-based). Watch out for Dim Sum or Momo wrappers and Tempura batters.

### Mediterranean:

Beware of Tabbouleh (Bulgur wheat), Fattoush (Fried bread), and Falafel (often contains flour).



### Thai & Korean:

Focus on rice-based dishes and clear soups (confirm soy-free).

### Mediterranean Grilled Foods:

Simply prepared meats and vegetables.

### Fresh Options:

Steamed vegetables, plain grilled proteins, and fresh salads.



## SMART TRAVEL EATING TIPS

- ✓ Stay faithful to your grain selection guidelines
- ✓ Aim for two meals with adequate protein each day
- ✓ Ensure one meal includes fruits or salad
- ✓ If one meal is heavy or excessive, keep the next meal light (soup and salad)
- ✓ Walk frequently and stay active while exploring your destination



## ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

- Limit alcohol to two drinks or two glasses of wine if consumed
- Beer is not permitted
- Treat alcohol like a cereal serving — if alcohol is consumed, avoid cereals or similar grains that day

## REMINDERS

When travelling or eating out, avoid foods containing:

- Oats or gluten-free oats
- Soy or soy-based foods
- Corn or corn products
- Hidden wheat flour in sauces, batters, or thickeners



## QUICK CHECKLIST BEFORE ORDERING

- Ask about flour or batter used in dishes
- Check for soy sauce, miso, or hidden sauces
- Be cautious with fried or tempura foods
- Avoid foods with corn-based ingredients
- Prefer grilled, steamed, or simply prepared meals
- When unsure, choose fresh fruits, salads, or plain grilled items

# WHAT'S COOKIN'?

This month: Superfood khichdi and Sundal

## SUPERFOOD KHICHDI

### INGREDIENTS

Quinoa .....	1/2 cup
Moong dal .....	1/4th
Toor dal .....	1/4 cup
Spinach, chopped .....	1 cup
Broccoli florets .....	1/2 cup
Beetroot, finely diced .....	1 small
Mushroom, sliced .....	1/2 cup
Moringa powder .....	1 tsp
Chia seeds .....	1 Tbsp
Tahini .....	1 Tbsp
Ghee .....	1 Tbsp
Turmeric powder .....	1/2 tsp
Salt	To taste
Coriander leave	

Recipe image source: *Sandyathome*



### METHOD

1. Rinse quinoa and dals well and soak for 15 minutes
2. Heat ghee in a pressure cooker or pot. Add turmeric and mushrooms, saute until golden
3. Add soaked grains and dals, beetroot, broccoli, salt and 4 cups water
4. Pressure cook for upto 3-4 whistles OR simmer for 20-25 minutes in a pot
5. While hot, fold in spinach, moringa powder and chia seeds
6. Stir in tahini for a creamy finish. Adjust consistency with hot water if needed
7. Garnish with coriander leaves and serve warm!



## SUNDAL

### INGREDIENTS

Chickpeas, soaked and rinsed .....	½ cup
Ghee .....	1 ½ Tbsp
Mustard seeds .....	½ tsp
Cumin .....	½ tsp
Urad dal .....	1 tsp
Curry leaves .....	4-5 nos
Red chillies .....	1-2
Ginger, grated (optional) .....	½ tsp
Turmeric .....	A pinch
Coconut, grated .....	2 Tbsp
Salt .....	

### METHOD

1. Pressure cook chickpeas upto 4 whistles
2. Heat pan with ghee. Add cumin, urad dal, mustard seeds. Saute until dal turns golden
3. Add curry leaves and red chillies. When leaves turn crisp, add ginger
4. Add the chickpeas, turmeric and salt
5. Add coconut. Mix well and serve fresh!

# CROSSWORD

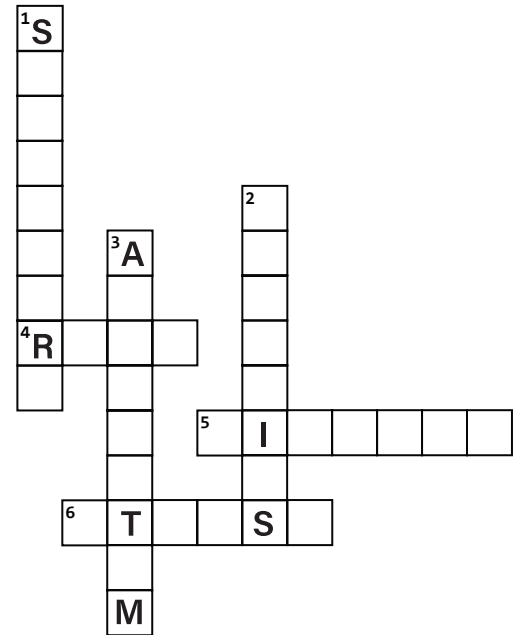
## What are your grain views?

### ACROSS

4. Common name of finger millet
5. Highly nutritious grains which has the potential of climate mitigation
6. \_\_\_\_\_ causes chemical reactions in the body and increases inflammation and disease risk

### DOWN

1. This type of lifestyle employs very little physical activity; increases the risk of chronic diseases
2. Study of genes and heredity
3. \_\_\_\_\_ will govern our physical existence



**spring**  
GLUTEN FREE

## THAT'S A WRAP

It's the Gut Feeling (which feels right)

Gut Friendly    Gluten Free    Rich in Fibre

www.springfoods.com

Newsletter curation: Celiac Society of India  
Publication layout design: The Partum Collective  
Web optimisation: Himalayan IT Solutions Pvt. Ltd.  
Content research: Anindita Das  
Logo design: Nabadeep Kakati  
Tech support & mailing: Neha Jain

The Celiac Society of India presents its new website, found at [celiacsocietyofindia.com](http://celiacsocietyofindia.com).