

Here is a quick and simple view of the Gluten-free (GF) diet. Not all areas of the diet are as clear-cut as portrayed by this Guide. This is intended to be used as a safe and temporary survival tool until the newly diagnosed celiac can gather additional information. Understanding these dietary requirements will enable you to read labels of food products and determine if a product is GF, not GF, or questionable. Questionable ingredients are those that do not give enough information to determine whether or not it is gluten free. Examples of these are modified food starch (the type of starch needs to be identified).

**Celiac Disease (CD)** is a chronic digestive disorder found in individuals who are genetically susceptible. Damage to the small intestine is caused by a immunologically toxic reaction to the ingestion of gluten. This does not allow food to be properly absorbed. Even small amounts of gluten in foods may affect those with celiac disease and cause health problems. Damage can occur to the small bowel even in the absence of symptoms.

**Gluten** is the generic name for certain types of proteins contained in the common cereal grains wheat, barley, rye and their common derivatives. Currently, oats are not recommended because of the potential unacceptable levels of contamination.

#### Allowed:

Rice, corn, soy, potato, tapioca, beans, garfava, sorghum, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, arrowroot, amaranth, tef, Montina®, and nut flours.

*The following grains contain gluten and are*

#### **Not Allowed in any form:**

Wheat (durum, semolina, kamut, spelt), rye, barley, and triticale.

#### Labels

The key to understanding the GF diet is to become a good ingredient label reader. Food labels containing the following ingredients are **questionable** and **should not** be consumed unless you can **verify** they do not contain or are derived from prohibited grains:

- ◆ Brown rice syrup (frequently made from barley)
- ◆ Caramel color (infrequently made from barley)
- ◆ Dextrin (usually corn, but may be derived from wheat)
- ◆ Flour or cereal products
- ◆ Malt or malt flavoring (usually made from barley. Okay if made from corn.)
- ◆ Malt vinegar
- ◆ Modified food starch or modified starch (from unspecified or forbidden source)
- ◆ Soy sauce or soy sauce solids (many soy sauces contain wheat)

#### Frequently overlooked foods that often contain gluten:

- ◆ Breading
- ◆ Broth
- ◆ Coating mixes
- ◆ Communion wafers
- ◆ Croutons
- ◆ Imitation bacon
- ◆ Imitation seafood
- ◆ Marinades
- ◆ Pastas
- ◆ Processed meats
- ◆ Roux
- ◆ Sauces
- ◆ Self-basting poultry
- ◆ Soup bases
- ◆ Stuffings
- ◆ Thickeners

**Distilled alcoholic beverages and vinegars are gluten-free.** Distilled products do not contain any harmful gluten peptides. Research indicates that the gluten peptide is too large to carry over in the distillation process. This leaves the resultant liquid gluten-free. Wines are gluten-free. Beer, ale, and malt vinegar are made from gluten-containing grains and are **not** distilled, therefore they are **not** gluten-free.

#### Clear Labels are Safest

A clear label has no gluten-containing ingredients or questionable ingredients. If it has questionable ingredients, avoid it or find a comparable product that is gluten free. **Labels must be read every time you purchase food.** Manufacturers can change ingredients at any time. Some products remain GF for years while others do not. You may verify ingredients by calling or writing a food manufacturer and specifying the ingredient and lot number of the food in question. State your needs clearly – be patient, persistent and polite.

### **If In Doubt Go Without!**

If unable to verify ingredients or the ingredient list is unavailable – **DO NOT EAT IT.** Regardless of the amount eaten, it is not worth triggering your immune system and the damage to the small intestine that occurs every time gluten is consumed, whether symptoms are present or not. Watch for any adverse reactions when adding new foods to your diet. Individuals may have sensitivity reactions to foods other than gluten.

### **Wheat-Free Is Not Gluten-Free.**

Products labeled Wheat-Free are not necessarily gluten-free. They may still contain rye, barley or other ingredients that are not GF.

### **Contamination**

**Food Preparation:** Gluten free foods being prepared must not come into contact with food containing gluten in any manner. Contamination may come from foods touching each other, being prepared on common surfaces, or with utensils that are not thoroughly cleaned after preparing gluten-containing foods. Using a common toaster for gluten-free bread and regular bread is a major source of contamination. Flour sifters should not be shared with gluten-containing flours. Deep fried foods cooked in oil shared with breaded products should not be consumed. Condiments in containers shared by others may also provide contamination. When a person dips into a condiment a second time, with the knife (used for spreading), the condiment becomes contaminated with crumbs (i.e. mustard, mayonnaise, jam, peanut butter, butter, and margarine).

**Food Manufacturing:** Foods **not** produced in a gluten-free environment have the potential to be contaminated with gluten. This may occur when machinery or equipment is inadequately cleaned after producing gluten-containing foods. For example the machinery used to mill flour is hard to clean and gluten-containing residue may remain. Wheat flour can stay airborne for many hours in a bakery (or home) and contaminate preparation surfaces/utensils or gluten-free products left out.

### **Attitude is Everything**

Like anything new, the GF diet takes time to adjust to. It is natural to mourn old favorite gluten-containing foods for a short time. Stay focused on all the foods you can eat. Fresh fruits and vegetables are both delicious and healthy. Fresh poultry, fish and meat provide protein and are naturally GF. Most dairy foods can also still be enjoyed (providing you are not lactose intolerant.) GF substitutes for foods commonly made with wheat are available at many health food stores and from GF food manufacturers. Try rice flour waffles for breakfast; a sandwich on bread made from GF flours for lunch; and rice, corn, or quinoa pasta for dinner. Your new way of eating will be very satisfying!

**Not All Adverse Reactions Are Due To Celiac Disease:** Lactose intolerance; food sensitivities or allergies to soy, corn, or other foods; or the stomach flu, are common causes of symptoms similar to Celiac Disease. Newly diagnosed celiacs may have trouble digesting certain foods, especially fatty foods, until their small intestine has had a chance to heal and start working normally. If necessary, keep a diary of foods eaten. Read labels, remember what you ate, and listen to your body.

The GF diet is a life long commitment and should not be started before being properly diagnosed with CD/DH. Starting the diet without complete testing is not recommended and makes diagnosis difficult. Tests to confirm CD could be negative if a person were on the diet for very long. A valid test would require reintroducing gluten (gluten challenge) before testing. Celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disease and confirmation of CD will help future generations be aware of the risk of CD within the family.

This Guide was developed by nutrition experts and published by the Celiac Disease Foundation (CDF) and the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG), to assist persons newly diagnosed with celiac disease and/or dermatitis herpetiformis, with preliminary gluten-free food choices. Both organizations offer patient support and educational activities and materials. CDF and GIG are 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations. Contact us for further information.

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