

GLUTEN-FREE DIET BASICS

Before you get started, here are answers to some commonly asked questions.

What is gluten?

Gluten is a term for the storage proteins (prolamins) found in **wheat, barley and rye**. This diet restricts these grains and all foods containing even *traces* of wheat, barley and rye. In addition for years **oats** have also been restricted although the prolamins found in oats has not been found to be harmful to celiacs. However oats are often contaminated with wheat, barley and rye during processing or as a result of crop rotation. Therefore, unless oats are labeled as “pure” or uncontaminated, newly diagnosed celiacs, and those who have not tolerated oats in the past should avoid foods containing oats.

Will food labels give me all the information I need?

Since 2006, all foods regulated by the FDA which contain wheat must be labeled clearly “contains wheat”. However, labels must still be examined for sources of gluten found in barley and rye, especially malt and malt flavoring. The government is still working on a legal definition of gluten free which, once determined, should clarify labels further by defining all foods which are gluten free. (Please refer to: [Safe Gluten-Free Ingredient List](#) and [Unsafe Food & Ingredient List](#) when reading ingredient labels.)

What if I can't tell by the label if a food item contains gluten?

Don't purchase or eat the item until you check with the product's manufacturer. There are gluten-free shopper's guidelines available for purchase both in print and online that can save you time at the market; although these may not be as current as the information (remember - ingredients can change) obtained by calling the manufacturer. Most products have a toll-free number readily available on their packaging.

Why are there many different versions of the gluten-free diet?

When reviewing the following information, it is important to note that there are several celiac associations as well as medical groups and universities with different interpretations of a gluten free diet. The diet also varies from country to country. The major issue is that there are foods which should be technically free of gluten (eg distilled vinegar); but the possibility of small amounts of gluten getting through the manufacturing process concerns some celiacs. You may hear many different opinions on oats, vinegar, ketchup and wheat starch. The best advice is to start with as few processed foods as possible until familiar and comfortable with the diet.

What can I eat?

To begin with, there are many foods that you may eat. Fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats and most dairy foods are gluten-free. Until you are familiar with the diet it is easiest to focus on these foods and gradually add in gluten-free bakery products and processed foods.

YES! You may eat the following!

MEAT/PROTEIN

PLAIN fish, chicken, pork, beef, turkey, eggs
PLAIN tofu, tempeh, beans (kidney, navy, lentil)

MILK PRODUCTS

Milk (whole, 2%, 1 %); buttermilk
Cream, ½ and ½
Cheese: cheddar, swiss, gouda, MOST American cheese
Yogurt and ice cream (without additives such as cereal, cookie crumbs)

FRUIT/ FRUIT JUICE

FRESH fruit (all!)
Fruit juice, canned fruit, frozen fruit, dried fruit

VEGETABLES

All fresh veggies
Canned vegetables (without sauce)
Frozen vegetables (without sauce)

STARCH/GRAINS

Rice, rice noodles
Polenta, corn tortillas
Bread made from any of the following: arrowroot, corn, tapioca or potato starch
Bread made from corn, potato, rice, bean or soy flour
Buckwheat, flax, amaranth, quinoa, sorghum

CEREAL

Puffed rice, Rice Chex, cream of rice, cornmeal, hominy, grits

NUTS /SNACKS/SEEDS

Nuts: almonds, cashews, peanuts, walnuts
Seeds: poppy, sesame, sunflower
Corn chips, Potato chips, popcorn, rice cakes

MISCELLANEOUS

Salt and pepper, pure herbs and spices
Vanilla, baking soda, cream of tartar, MSG, bakers yeast, guar gum, xanthan gum,
aspartame, ketchup, relish, pickles, olives
Vinegar: distilled, cider, wine, balsamic, rice
Coffee, tea, soda, fruit drinks, wine

PLEASE AVOID THESE FOODS!

(CAREFUL LABEL READING IS ADVISED, PLEASE LOOK FOR “HIDDEN” SOURCES OF GLUTEN, SUCH AS MALT, MALT FLAVORING, WHEAT BASED FILLERS, WHEAT STARCH)

MEAT/PROTEIN FOODS

Breaded chicken, meat, fish, self- basting poultry.

(READ CAREFULLY THE LABELS OF IMITATION SEAFOOD, COLD CUTS, HOT DOGS, CANNED PORK AND BEANS, FLAVORED TOFU, FLAVORED TEMPEH AND PROCESSED CHEESES.)

MILK/MILK PRODUCTS

Malted milk

(READ CAREFULLY THE LABELS OF NONDAIRY CREAMERS, CHOCOLATE MILK DRINKS).

FRUIT

Dried fruit coated with flour

(READ LABELS CAREFULLY FOR FRUIT FILLINGS WITH THICKENERS)

VEGETABLES

Creamed vegetable mixes, commercially breaded veggies

(READ LABELS OF FROZEN FRENCH FRIED POTATOES)

STARCHES/GRAINS

BARLEY, WHEAT, RYE.

Noodles and pasta made from wheat

Couscous, orzo.

Any bread product made from wheat, barley or rye

Any bread or bread product or pasta containing kamut, durum, semolina, bran, bulgar, triticale, spelt, wheat starch

All commercial biscuit, pancake, waffle mixes unless specifically noted to be gluten free.

Pretzels, flour tortillas.

(READ LABELS CAREFULLY FOR WHEAT STARCH AND/OR MALT IN FLAVORED CHIPS, POPCORN CAKES, RICE CAKES, AND RICE CRACKERS)

CEREALS

Bran, bran flakes, wheat flakes, wheateena, wheat germ, bulgar, spelt, barley cereal.

(READ LABELS CAREFULLY FOR MALT FLAVORING ON CORN AND RICE BASED CEREALS; MANUFACTURERS HAVE RECENTLY REMOVED MALT FROM SEVERAL POPULAR CEREALS!)

DESSERTS

ALL commercial cakes, pies, cookies, unless noted to be gluten-free

Ice cream cones (there are GF available)

(READ LABELS CAREFULLY FOR PUDDING MIXES)

MISCELLANEOUS

Licorice

Soups with noodles, pasta or orzo

Beer, ale, lager, wine cooler drinks

Malt vinegar

Gravy

Cheese sauces, cream sauces if made with wheat flour

(READ LABELS CAREFULLY ON SOUPS, BOUILLON CUBES, FLAVORED HERBAL TEAS, COCOA MIXES, SOY SAUCE, MARINADES, MEAT SAUCES, STEAK SAUCES)

Adapted from “Gluten-Free Diet” in *American Dietetic Association Pediatric Manual of Clinical Dietetics*, 2nd edition, 2008. pp 607-618. by Kathy French, MS RD CSP