



Nutrition
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GLUTEN-FREE LIVING

GET THE FACTS ON GLUTEN

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. When gluten-containing flour is kneaded with water, gluten proteins develop cross-links and the dough becomes elastic—giving wheat bread the stability to rise without collapsing. Wheat gluten is also used in Asian cuisines as a vegetarian protein.

As many as 1 in 133 North Americans may have celiac disease. In celiac disease, or dermatitis herpetiformis, consuming even a tiny fraction of gluten causes harm to the small intestine. Eating a strict gluten-free diet will allow the intestinal damage to heal and prevent disease complications which include nutrient deficiencies, risk of osteoporosis and reduced fertility.

LIVING THE LIFE: Gluten Free and Fabulous

While celiacs need to choose foods with care, the staples of a healthy diet are the same for celiacs as they are for the rest of us: plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole gluten-free grains, lean proteins and dairy.

Many gluten-free grain foods have typically been made out of refined gluten-free flours and sugars, leaving celiacs with few healthy options. Now the options are endless. Many nutritious gluten-free grains such as quinoa, amaranth and brown rice are widely available, as are products containing these grains. Legumes such as chick peas and lentils are quick to prepare and provide another wholesome source of quality carbohydrates.

Which Foods Contain Gluten?

- Malt
- Beer
- Graham flour
- Commercial oats
- Triticale
- All relatives of wheat, including Kamut, spelt and faro
- Couscous
- Soy sauce
- Brewer's Yeast

Finding your nutrients in the right place

Iron: beef, beans, nuts and seeds, amaranth, quinoa, rice bran, oysters, spinach

Folate: chickpeas, soy flour, enriched parboiled rice, millet, beans, seeds, bananas

Calcium: dairy products, fortified orange juice, almonds, fish canned with bones, fortified soy beverages

Vitamin D: fish, milk, fortified orange juice

This handout is meant for educational purposes only. The information contained is not meant to replace consultation with a Registered Dietitian or qualified health professional.

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Have a nutrition question?
Ask Desiree, the Choices Dietitian at nutrition@choicesmarket.com

ARMING YOURSELF

Intestinal damage from gluten can result in reduced absorption of certain nutrients, such as iron and folate. Gluten free products that have not been fortified with vitamins and minerals increase the risk of deficiencies. Luckily, many newer products are now fortified.

Intestinal damage may also result in lactose intolerance. Ensure you're getting plenty of calcium and vitamin D in your diet, and experiment with dairy; most people can tolerate small amounts of lactose. Yogurts and cheeses are generally lower in lactose than fresh milk.

SLIPPING UP ON THE GLUTEN-FREE DIET

Lack of variety: There was a time when gluten free meant monotonous—not any more. Variety is the spice of life that helps to ensure you are eating a balanced diet. Each food has a unique mix of nutrients, and it's important to include a rainbow of fruits and vegetables and fantastic gluten-free grains in your diet.

Fibre intake: You may be quite refined – but your gluten free foods don't need to be! Eat a variety of whole grains and legumes for all their high-fibre goodness. Try crackers with whole grains and seeds, trail mixes with gluten-free cereals and snack on veggies and gluten-free dip.

Tricky labels: Manufacturers often change the ingredients of their products without warning. Always be sure to check labels — this is especially true now that allergen labelling is changing. Items without gluten-containing ingredients may now warn that there is wheat used in the same factory. While manufacturing may not have changed, awareness has: you can no longer consider those products strictly gluten free.

Avoid these sneaky sources of gluten:

- Sauces, dressings and marinades
- Imitation seafood
- Snack foods
- Processed meats and cheeses
- Dried fruits dusted with starch
- Bouillon and soups

For more information, see the Canadian Celiac Association Pocket Dictionary: Acceptability of Foods and Food Ingredients for the Gluten Free Diet

EATING OATS

Although the oat protein avenin does not appear to cause intestinal damage, commercial oats are typically cross-contaminated with gluten. Pure, uncontaminated oats are safe for many people on a gluten-free diet and are available at Choices Markets. The Canadian Celiac Association recommends discussing oats with your physician before adding them to your diet as some people may not be able to tolerate even small amounts of oats. For those who can, safe intake levels are 1/2–3/4 of a cup of dry oats for adults or 1/4 of a cup of dry oats for children daily.

COOKING FOR SOMEONE ON A GLUTEN-FREE DIET?

Read labels religiously; if possible, find a copy of the Celiac Association Pocket Dictionary: Acceptability of Foods and Food Ingredients for the Gluten Free Diet for your shopping trip. At home, avoid cross-contamination: gluten-free bread may not be toasted in the same toaster as regular bread, new peanut butter and jam containers are needed for gluten free guests, all surfaces must be cleaned thoroughly before preparing a gluten-free meal and no bulk foods should be used in preparing meals.

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