



## ASK ALL THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

Dining out can seem intimidating, especially when you are newly gluten-free. The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) is here to help!



### 1 Look at the online menu and call ahead

If the restaurant has posted their menu online, check it out to see if there are any possible options. Before your visit (not during a lunch or dinner rush), call ahead and speak to the manager and/or chef.

#### When you call ahead, ask about:

- Gluten-free menu or gluten-free options
- Whether they've completed a gluten-free training program, such as GREAT Kitchens
- How they handle gluten-free orders to prevent cross-contact. If their answers are overly confident but without details, or if they don't have procedures in place, you may want to look for a different place to dine.



### 2 Be detailed

Tell the waiter, manager, or chef that you have celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity ('gluten sensitivity') and must maintain a strict gluten-free diet for medical necessity. Ask for their help in preparing a safe meal for you.

#### Questions for ordering a safe meal and minimizing mistakes:

"How do you verify that your ingredients are gluten-free?"

#### Ask about:

- Spice blends
- Thickeners
- Coatings
- Toppings/garnishes

"How is this dish prepared? How do you avoid cross-contact with gluten-containing ingredients?"

#### Ask about:

- Separate prep space
- Separate cookware and utensils
- Airborne flour in the kitchen
- Possible cross-contact on the grill
- Dedicated gluten-free fryer



### 3 Be proactive and always double check

If you are unsure that your meal is truly gluten-free at any point during your experience, make sure to ask the manager, chef, and/or owner:

#### "Is this gluten-free?"

- Look closely at your plate for signs of gluten
- Respectful reminder - can't even have "just a crumb"
- Need to know if mistakes were made while preparing your food so that you can remain healthy. Be as specific as possible. Tell them, "This looks breaded—are you sure it's gluten-free?" or "This looks different than I expected," etc.

#### If your meal was deliciously gluten-free:

- Thank them
- Tip well
- Spread the word
- Become a repeat customer



### 4 Follow-up after your visit

Here's how to get the conversation started with the chef, manager, and/or owner:

- Have your receipt available and check:
  - Date/time and server's name
  - Any sort of gluten-free indicator for your meal
  - Other relevant facts or details
- Tell them whether you had a good or bad experience and explain why
- Ask the restaurant to become a GREAT Kitchen by posting this link on their social media: [www.greatGFkitchen.org](http://www.greatGFkitchen.org)
- Their questions can be e-mailed to us at: [GREAT@CeliacCentral.org](mailto:GREAT@CeliacCentral.org)

#### About this Guide

This guide is meant to be a tool for communicating your gluten-free needs, not a guarantee for a safe meal. Your health comes first, so if you feel uncomfortable at any time, ask to speak with the manager or consider dining at another establishment.

Questions and tips were contributed by NFCA staff, NFCA Scientific/Medical Advisory Council, NFCA Patient Advisory Council, and NFCA webinar panelist Pam Cureton, RD, LDN.