



The Gluten-Free Diet

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, rye and the derivatives of these grains, including malt and brewer's yeast.

Those on a gluten-free diet must forgo all products containing wheat, barley, rye, and the various ingredients that contain derivatives of these grains. Those who are gluten-free embrace a diet filled with fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry, fish, beans, and legumes. Nuts and most dairy products are naturally gluten-free, and safe for individuals who do not have allergies to these respective food groups.

There are a variety of alternatives that naturally DO NOT contain gluten and thus can be consumed by those on a gluten-free diet. These include*:

- Almond meal flour
- Amaranth
- Brown, white and wild rice
- Buckwheat
- Coconut flour
- Corn
- Cornstarch
- Guar Gum
- Millet
- Pea flour
- Potato flour
- Potatoes
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- Soy flour
- Teff

****Visit CeliacCentral.org for more common gluten-free alternatives!***

A special caution must also be delivered when it comes to oats. While oats in their natural form do not contain gluten, a small portion of patients with celiac disease react to oats in their pure, uncontaminated form. Some literature suggests that a protein in oats can trigger a similar response to gluten. Additionally, most mills that process oats also manufacture gluten-containing grains, making the chances of cross contamination inevitable. The best advice we can offer is to take a great deal of care before introducing oats into your diet, which includes speaking with your healthcare provider about this dietary change. There is no way to determine if you will react, so proceed with caution. Verify that the oats you are using are "pure, uncontaminated," "gluten-free," or "certified gluten-free." Experts recommend that up to 50g of dry gluten-free oats are considered safe. Check nutrition labels for portion size.

Most notably, the gluten-free diet is known for alleviating the symptoms of celiac disease, including:

- Dermatitis herpetiformis, an itchy skin rash known as the skin version of celiac
- Fatigue
- Gastrointestinal distress, such as diarrhea, constipation, gas, bloating, abdominal pain
- Headaches, including migraines
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Joint and muscle pain
- Mood disorders, including depression, anxiety, and "brain fog"
- Peripheral neuropathy, which causes tingling in hands and feet
- Osteopenia and osteoporosis
- Unexplained infertility and other reproductive health problems
- Weight gain or weight loss

Three million Americans have celiac disease and an estimated 18 million Americans have a sensitivity to gluten. Unfortunately, most live unaware and remain undiagnosed. In fact, 95% of people with celiac disease don't know they have it. This means that foods like bread, bagels, pasta, pretzels, cookies, cakes, and crackers are making them sick -- sometimes VERY sick. Left untreated, celiac disease can lead to further complications such as infertility, osteoporosis, other autoimmune disorders and even cancer.

**Fact
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Leading market research companies and industry authorities such as the National Restaurant Association (NRA) and American Culinary Federation (ACF) have **named “gluten-free” as one of the top food trends for 2011.**

The gluten-free diet is **one of the fastest-growing nutritional movements in America**, gaining popularity for its health and therapeutic benefits. Those who have already seen benefits from this diet have:

- **Autism**, which affects 1 in 110 children. A gluten-free/casein-free diet is a popular treatment for symptoms of Autism.
- **Celiac disease**, which impacts 1% of the population, or 3 million Americans. The gluten-free diet is the only treatment for this common genetic autoimmune condition.
- **Gluten sensitivity**, which occurs in 6% of the population, or 18 million Americans. The gluten-free diet is the only treatment for this condition whose symptoms are identical to celiac yet is less clinically severe.
- **Wheat allergies**, which is included in the top 8-allergen list.
- **Multiple sclerosis, thyroid disease and ADHD** – all conditions whose sufferers report an alleviation of symptoms when following a gluten-free diet.

**Fact
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According to U.S. News and World Report estimates, **nearly 15 to 25 percent of consumers** report looking for gluten-free products. Continuing growth in the gluten-free food industry is expected to continue, reaching **\$6 billion by 2015.**

In order to maximize the health and nutritional benefits of going gluten-free, you should embrace a diet filled with a variety of naturally gluten-free foods such as fruits, vegetables and lean proteins, as well as gluten-free grains. FDA recommendations encourage everyone, including those on a gluten-free diet, to avoid overly processed foods, and keep refined sugar and saturated fat intakes to a minimum.

As with any nutritional regimen, the practices of portion control and moderation are essential for those eating gluten-free. Daily exercise is also necessary for managing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

A gluten-free diet is by no means a cure all. Even a small percentage of those with celiac disease may still experience symptoms after going gluten-free; these individuals should schedule an appointment with their healthcare providers.

Most importantly, a gluten-free diet cannot replace a formal consultation, diagnosis or recommendation from a physician or trained healthcare professional. In fact, dietitians knowledgeable in celiac disease and the gluten-free diet play a critical role in the management of this autoimmune condition.

Adhering to a gluten-free diet can be tough. But with a little education and an optimistic approach, individuals and their families can learn to live – and LOVE – the gluten-free lifestyle!

To learn more about the benefits of the gluten-free diet visit our website:

www.CeliacCentral.org

restoring health... reclaiming lives...