**Gluten-free diet (The Basics)**

**What is a gluten-free diet?**

A gluten-free diet is a diet that doesn't contain any gluten. Gluten is a protein that is found in wheat, rye, barley, and (sometimes) oats. Many foods, such as breads, pasta, pizza, cereals, and crackers, have gluten in them. People who are on a gluten-free diet should not eat any foods with gluten.

**Who should be on a gluten-free diet?**

People with a condition called celiac disease should be on a gluten-free diet. Celiac disease is a condition that affects the body's ability to break down certain foods. People with celiac disease get sick if they eat foods with gluten. They need to be on a strict gluten-free diet for their whole life.

If you think you have celiac disease, don't start a gluten-free diet until after you are tested for the disease. That's because what you eat can affect your test results.

More and more, though, people without celiac disease are eating a gluten-free diet. They might have heard that this diet can help them lose weight or feel better. It's true that a gluten-free diet can be healthy. But it also sometimes keeps people from getting all the nutrition they need. Also, some gluten-free products have a lot of sugar and calories. This can make it harder for some people to stay at a healthy weight. If you are thinking about being on a gluten-free diet, ask your doctor or nurse if it's a good choice for you.

**How do I get started?**

To get started, you will work with a dietitian (food expert) or other professional who has experience with a gluten-free diet. They will:

●Teach you which foods are fine to eat and which foods you should avoid

●Help you plan balanced meals so that you get the nutrition you need

●Give you gluten-free recipes

●Help you find gluten-free substitutes for your favorite foods (such as pasta or cookies)

You can get advice and help from other people, too. Ask your doctor or nurse if there is a local support group for people with celiac disease.

It can be hard to learn how to manage a gluten-free diet, especially at first. But it usually gets easier with practice and over time.

**Which foods can I eat?**

Foods that are gluten free and fine to eat include the following:

**Gluten-free foods-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

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| Amaranth | Flax (seed, flax seed meal/flour) and Chia (seed, flour) | Quinoa |
| Arrowroot | Legume flours (chick pea, lentil) | Rice (flour, bran, rice blends), wild rice |
| Bean flours (garbanzo, black bean, etc.) | Mesquite flour | Sorghum |
| Buckwheat | Millet | Soy flour |
| Cassava | Nut flours (almond, hazelnut) and seed flours (pumpkin, sunflower) | Tapioca (flour, starch, pearls) |
| Coconut flour | Oats (bran, flour) choose uncontaminated, labeled gluten-free oats | Teff |
| Corn (grits, meal, starch, flour, bran) | Potato (flour, starch) |   |

The foods listed above are naturally gluten- free. However, naturally gluten-free grains, flours, nuts, seeds, and products made from them may be contaminated with wheat, barley, and/or rye. All grains, starches, and flours made from the foods above must be labeled gluten-free, except for plain rice and plain wild rice: Choose labeled gluten-free nuts and seeds whenever possible, particularly seasoned or dry roasted.

●Rice, corn, potatoes, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, and soybeans

●Special flours, pasta, and other products made from these foods and labeled "gluten free"

●Fruits and vegetables

●Meat and eggs

●Wine and distilled alcoholic drinks, such as rum, tequila, vodka, and whiskey

Milk, cheese, and other dairy foods are also gluten free. But many people with celiac disease have trouble digesting these foods, especially at first. Doctors usually recommend that people with celiac disease avoid eating dairy products, at least for a short time, while their intestines are healing.

**Which foods should I not eat?**

You need to avoid all foods made from or with wheat, rye, and barley. Ask your doctor or dietitian if you can eat oats.

Many types of foods contain or might contain gluten, such as:

●Flour, breads, crackers, muffins, and baking mixes

●Pasta, pastries, and cereals

●Some sauces, spreads, spices, condiments, and salad dressings

●Processed meats and meat substitutes (like vegetarian burgers)

●Beers, ales, lagers, and malt vinegars

To know exactly which foods you can eat, you will have to read ingredient labels. Foods that are labeled "gluten free" or say they are made or processed in a "gluten-free facility" are fine to eat. Foods that contain wheat are **not** fine to eat. If you are unsure whether a food is gluten free, call the company. Their phone number should be on the package.

Some medicines (both prescription and over-the-counter) and vitamin supplements contain a small amount of gluten. But you can still take most types of pills if you have celiac disease. Check with your doctor or nurse if you are not sure.

**Foods that contain gluten**

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| **Foods that definitely contain gluten** |
| Grains: |
| Wheat (einkorn, durum, faro, graham, kamut, semolina, spelt) |
| Barley |
| Rye |
| Triticale |
| Beers, ales, and lagers\* |
| Breading, bread crumbs, and coating mixes\* |
| Brewer's yeast |
| Communion wafers/hosts\* |
| Challah\* |
| Croutons\* |
| Licorice\* |
| Malt, malt flavoring, malt extract derived from barley, malt vinegar\* |
| Matzo and matzo meal\* |
| Pasta\* |
| Soy sauce\* |
| Stuffing (for poultry)\* |
| **Foods that may contain gluten** |
| Broth, bouillon, or soup stock |
| Brown rice syrup |
| Cake frosting |
| Candy |
| Condiments |
| Dates (if rolled in oat flour) |
| Drink mixes |
| Energy bars |
| Flavored teas and coffees |
| Flavored spirits (eg, raspberry vodka) |
| Flour or cereal products |
| Hard ciders, hard seltzers, hard lemonades, hard iced teas (varies with type) |
| Imitation products (eg, imitation seafood) |
| Medicines (both over-the-counter and prescription, including probiotics) |
| Oats (unless they are labeled "gluten-free") |
| Processed meats (eg, jerky or sausages) |
| Rice pilaf and other packaged rice mixtures |
| Salad dressing |
| Sauces, gravies, marinades, and thickeners |
| Seasonings and smoke flavoring |
| Seasoned chips, nuts, and seeds |
| Self-basting poultry |
| Vitamins and herbal supplements |

For the foods that might contain gluten, it depends on their ingredients and where they were made. To know for sure, you will need to check the ingredient label.

\* These products usually contain gluten, unless specifically labeled "gluten-free."

**Will I need to take vitamins?**

You might. Celiac disease can keep your digestive system from normally absorbing the nutrients in foods. To get all the nutrients you need, your doctor or nurse might recommend that you take a daily vitamin.

**Can I eat out?**

Yes.

 Many restaurants now have gluten-free menus or foods. But always let the restaurant know you can't have gluten. That way, they can be extra careful when they cook your food.