

Gluten-Free Eating Plan Guide

Gluten-Free Eating Plan Guide

If you or your child has just been diagnosed with celiac disease, you may feel overwhelmed or unsure about what to do next. Keep in mind that celiac disease is treatable by avoiding foods that contain gluten. The following tips will help you make the transition to a gluten-free lifestyle.

What is Gluten and What Foods Contain Gluten?

Gluten is the name for a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and any ingredients derived from these three grains. It is the substance in flour that forms the structure of dough. Gluten can be found in food items such as breads, cereals, pasta and pizza, and as added ingredients to many processed food items.

How to Start Eating Gluten-Free

Before you head to the grocery store to search for gluten-free products, look at the foods you already have at home. Many of your favorite foods may be gluten-free.

Fruits, vegetables, meats, eggs and milk are all naturally gluten-free. Grains and starchy vegetables like rice, rice noodles, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, corn chips, corn tortillas, beans, lentils, chickpeas and other legumes are all naturally gluten-free. Spices and herbs, cooking oils and peanut butter are also gluten-free.

Gluten-Free Food Preparation Tips

Eating gluten-free isn't just about buying foods that do not contain wheat, rye and barley. You also need to think about how you prepare your food. Cross-contamination and cross-contact can occur when gluten-free foods come in contact with foods that contain gluten or surfaces that gluten has touched.

- Purchase separate jam, jelly, mayonnaise and peanut butter to avoid wheat/breadcrumbs in the shared jars or purchase squeeze containers that do not require a knife to spread.
- Purchase a separate toaster for gluten-free breads, use a toaster oven that can be cleaned between uses or place tinfoil on the rack to avoid contamination.
- Clean countertops and cutting boards with soap and water to remove gluten-containing crumbs. Prepare the gluten-free food item first then follow with the gluten-containing item second.
- Use a separate colander to drain your gluten-free pasta or drain it first if you are also making regular gluten-containing pasta.

- Cooking utensils, colanders and pans need to be cleaned with soap and water after each use to remove any gluten contamination that may have occurred between uses.

Eating Gluten-Free Away from Home

Dining out is a part of our way of life and, with a little effort and planning, can continue to be enjoyed.

- Before heading to the restaurant, do your homework. Most restaurants have a website, so review the menu online. Some restaurants have a gluten-free menu or a list of common food allergens used in making their foods that you can access online.
- Call ahead and talk to the manager or chef and ask about specially prepared items that are gluten-free.
- Try to make your first visit to a restaurant outside of peak dining times.
- Always identify yourself or your child as someone who cannot eat wheat, rye or barley instead of saying gluten. Most people have heard of gluten but do not know what it is.
- Don't be afraid to ask how the food is prepared. Meats may be marinated in soy sauce, French fries may be made in the same fryer as other breaded products and hamburgers may be grilled in the same area as hamburger buns. All of these methods can lead to gluten contamination. Bring your own gluten-free bread or crackers.

School Accommodations for Children with Celiac Disease

Children with celiac disease qualify for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, a child with celiac disease is entitled to receive a gluten-free lunch at school, at no extra cost to the family. Talk with school administrators to discuss setting up a 504 plan that will list important accommodations needed throughout the school day, such as advanced notice of special parties that involve foods, field trips and an accidental exposure notice to parents. If school lunch is not an option, pack a lunch from home.