



What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in various cereals – wheat (all forms), rye, barley and oats. Opinion varies on oats; they may be contaminated with wheat in storage, or oats may contain a small amount of gluten. After a period of elimination, you could try challenging with oats to see if they cause any symptoms.

Why do some people have to avoid gluten?

There could be a number of reasons. Coeliac Disease is an autoimmune disease where the person has an intestinal sensitivity or intolerance to gluten. It injures the lining of the intestinal tract, and leads to malabsorption, malnutrition, bloating, pain, diarrhoea, constipation, nausea, or it could even be asymptomatic. When tested, anti-gliadin-bodies are present in the blood.

The component of gluten that causes problems for people with coeliac disease is the prolamine fraction. The prolamine fraction in wheat is called gliadin; in rye, it is called secalin; in barley, it is hordein; and in oats, it is avenin.

Other people are just sensitive to gluten without actually having Coeliac Disease. They have some gluten intolerance, but do not have anti-gliadin-bodies present. But avoiding gluten gives symptom relief for things like sinusitis, eczema, muscle pains, mood etc.



What happens internally if I eat gluten?

For some people, gluten causes inflammation of the intestinal wall and this flattens the villi which are little finger-like projections. Villi increase the surface area of the intestine which helps you to absorb nutrients. If they are flattened, you absorb fewer nutrients.

Do I have to avoid anything else?

Lactose intolerance is also common with gluten intolerance or sensitivity. You may need to remove dairy products from your diet too. Also, some medications use gluten as a binder.

If I avoid lots of foods, will I get any nutrient deficiencies?

If you are gluten sensitive and continue to eat gluten-containing foods, you will have deficiencies anyway. However, on a gluten-free diet, you should watch out for your iron, zinc and vitamins B2, B9 and B12. You can use a good quality supplement for these if you do not get enough in your foods.



Can I still eat out?

Yes, but you will have to take care to avoid many different foods, so check the diet sheet. If you are booking at a restaurant, mention gluten-free when you are on the phone and see if the chef can oblige. Otherwise, give clear instructions to the waiter when ordering. Look out for restaurants which are gluten free friendly, and remember to enjoy your food.

What about shopping?

Read all the food labels very carefully. If a food is labelled “gluten free”, gluten must not be detectable. If it has low gluten, then it should have less than 0.003%. Most frozen meals and fast foods will have to be avoided. Overall, your diet will improve a lot.

Is the diet sheet foolproof?

By and large, yes. However, some coeliacs can have secondary sensitivities, which can include lactose, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat and millet, so look out for your own sensitivities. On the other hand, some gluten-sensitive people can tolerate the ancient forms of wheat, which are spelt and kamut.



For further information:

The *Coeliac Society of Australia* has a website at <http://www.coeliac.org.au/> which has links to all state societies, and gives diet and symptom advice, and publishes a Hand-book with lots of good information.

Gluten free diet



Foods to go for

Grains etc.

quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice, basmati rice, wild rice, amaranth, millet, corn

Vegies

potato, sweet potato, parsnip, jerusalem artichoke, tapioca, arrowroot, carrots, pumpkins, cabbage, all green veg.

Fruits

pretty much all fruits, including dried (though if you have a sensitivity to sulphur dioxide, avoid dried fruit)

Non-veg. protein

meat and fish are fine, as long as they are not coated, battered, processed or come with a sauce. Again, read labels and if in doubt, buy the meat or fish and cook it yourself. Eggs are good protein.

Legumes

beans, lentils, chickpeas, peanuts, soybeans

Flours/Pastas

any made from the above sources, but check labels for fillers. For example, buckwheat noodles usually have some wheat as a filler.

Breads

gluten-free breads based on corn, rice, buckwheat or soy

Cereals

check the label for 'gluten free'. Homemade muesli made from brown rice flakes, puffed corn, puffed rice, soy products, coconut, raw nuts and seeds. Prefer organic if possible.

Dairy

if you are not lactose intolerant, then milk, cream, cheese and soymilk are OK, but check processed foods made with these products.

Snacks

rice crackers, rice cakes, corn cakes, corn chips, corn tortillas, popcorn, and products labelled 'gluten free'

Cooking

stocks and seasonings made from sesame, tamari (check label), fresh or dried herbs and spices, apple cider vinegar, soy, corn or potato flour, arrowroot, kuzu, mustard seeds and agar.

Drinks

wines, potato vodka, tea, good coffee, soft drinks, mineral water, veg and fruit juices



Foods to avoid

Grains etc.

wheat (all types), rye, barley, bulgur, semolina, triticale, couscous, oats, malt extract, and anything using baking powder or icing sugar

Root veg

any fruit or veg that are fried or coated, or processed

Fruits

fruit pies, fruit cakes, anything processed

Non-veg. protein

sausages, battered foods, processed meats or fish, thickened soups, meat pies, egg noodles, anything in sauce

Legumes

baked beans (unless labelled 'gluten free'). Check labels on other canned legumes.

Flours/Pastas

wheat (all forms, incl. wholemeal, bakers, white), barley, rye, semolina, all forms of wheat pasta and noodles including hokkien, 2 minute, soba etc. Only eat if label states 'gluten free'.

Breads

all wheat breads, barley, rye, oat, burritos, pumpernickel, cakes. For those who take Holy Communion, some wafers are made with gluten. Contact your church to check with the supplier.

Cereals

wheatgerm and wheat bran, oat bran, oats, anything containing malt, all commercial cereals unless labelled 'gluten free'

Dairy foods

cheese spreads, flavoured milks and yoghurts, processed cream

Snacks

biscuits, cakes, lollies, pastries, scones, liquorice, ice cream cones, processed foods in general, packet chips (read the labels)

Cooking

anything with malt, wheat starch, soy sauce, gravy mixes and seasonings, HVP and TVP, mustard pickles, Vegemite and similar products. Look on labels for binders and fillers, and buy an additive code book to check all codes

Drinks

cereal and malted drinks, some liqueurs, stout, guinness, beer, ale, lager, malted drinks, instant coffee substitutes, drink powders

