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## Gluten Free Diet

### What is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in grains including wheat, rye, oats and barley. Patients with Coeliac disease are sensitive to gluten which damages the lining of the small bowel. This damage affects the absorption of food and can lead to symptoms including weight loss, diarrhoea, iron and folic acid deficiency. A gluten free diet is the only long term treatment for Coeliac disease. Complete removal of gluten from the diet allows the gut to recover to normal over a period of time. Even small amounts of gluten are enough to prevent recovery or cause further damage. Obvious symptoms or damage may not occur at the time of consumption.

It is important to include a wide variety of gluten free cereal products in a Gluten Free diet. This can be as simple as adding small amounts of soy, potato flour or rice bran to a dish. These are important sources of fibre, B group vitamins, zinc and increase the variety of the diet.

### Food Labelling and Gluten

The Australian Standard of Gluten Free foods<sup>1</sup> now requires that foods labelled as "Gluten Free" contain no detectable gluten using a sensitive assay. There is no evidence that inclusion of extracted ingredients causes mucosal damage<sup>2</sup> although some patients with Coeliac disease may prefer not to eat products which contain these extracted ingredients. The Coeliac Society of Australia has changed the category of these products in their ingredient list including glucose syrup, dextrose and caramel colouring. Under the new standard, it will require careful reading of ingredients on products labelled as "gluten free" if Coeliacs choose to avoid these foods.

Foods may also contain less obvious sources of gluten as there is no requirement for manufacturers to specify the composition of ingredients that contribute less than 10% of a food. For example, it may be difficult to determine the origin of a soy sauce included as an ingredient in a commercial marinade. This means that gluten may be "carried over" into the marinade via the soy sauce. It is best to contact the manufacturer directly to determine the source of these ingredients.

It is essential that all food labels be rechecked regularly since the composition may change. Avoid any food that is doubtful.

### References

1. ANZFA and Aust. Food Council. (1997) Code of good manufacturing practice for the production of gluten free and low gluten foods.
2. Selby W, Faulkner – Hogg K, Coeliac Disease. Current Therapeutics, June 1998; 31 – 37.
3. Coeliac Disease – Kim F. Hogg, May 2000.

## Which Food is Safe to Eat?

Click on each of the food groups below for specific information –

- Cereal products, flours, baking products
- Bread, biscuits, cakes and pastry
- Vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Meat, fish, poultry and soups
- Dairy products, butter, margarine and oil
- Condiments and other flavouring
- Beverages
- Snacks

### Cereal products, flours, baking products

#### **Gluten Free – choose freely**

Arrowroot, corn (Maize) flour,  
Cornmeal, polenta, rice flour, potato  
flour, soy flour, lentil flour, millet.  
Rice (brown, white, wild), sago,  
tapioca, buckwheat, amaranth, quinoa  
Baby rice cereal. Rice bran.  
free diet.

Soy based Lecithin.

Rice and corn breakfast cereals (malt free)

Home-made/commercial  
muesli using allowed ingredients.

Gluten free pasta made with allowed  
flours. Rice Vermicelli.

Custard powder (check ingredients).

#### **Gluten Free – choose freely**

Glucose, dextrose, caramel.

Sugar – brown, white and raw.

Pure icing sugar.

Gelatine.

#### **Not Gluten Free – do not eat**

Wheat, wheat starch, wheat based  
cornflour, semolina, rye flour, triticale,  
bulgur, couscous, wheatgerm, wheat  
bran, oat bran, barley.

Oats – the current recommendation is that  
oats should be excluded from a gluten Psyllium.

Beware that oats may be listed as gluten  
free in some countries.

Malt, malt extract/maltodextrin (check  
sources).

Wheat breakfast cereals, or mixed grain  
cereals.

Macaroni and spaghetti.

#### **Not Gluten Free – do not eat**

Puddings and custard powders made from  
unsuitable flours.

Icing sugar mixtures.

Thickener (1400 – 1450) unless checked with manufacturer.

Pre gel starch.

Starch, modified starch unless sources are checked.

### Bread, biscuits, cakes and pastry

#### **Gluten Free – choose freely**

Gluten free bread

Gluten free biscuits, cakes pastry  
and pancakes.

Rice crackers, rice cakes, corn cakes

#### **Not Gluten Free – do not eat**

All gluten containing bread, biscuits, cakes,  
pastries, pies, crispbreads, crumpets and  
muffins containing unsuitable flours.

Foods in batter, crumbs or pastry including  
filo pastry.

Breadcrumbs and stuffings.

and corn and rice crispbreads.  
 Gluten free breadcrumbs.  
 Taco shells and pappadums (check ingredients). Corn tortillas.  
 Gluten free baking powder.

Bakers' yeast (gluten free)

Wheat based tortillas and burritos.  
 Baking powders based on unsuitable flours including wheat.  
 Communion hosts.  
 Some commercial yeast may contain gluten.  
 Decorative toppings including hundreds and thousands may contain gluten.

## **Vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts and seeds**

### ***Gluten Free - choose freely***

Fresh, frozen, dried or canned vegetables and fruits without sauce.  
 Vegetable and fruit juices.  
 Dried beans such as soya, kidney, cannellini, borlotti, chickpeas, lentils and split peas.  
 Tinned beans (check ingredients).  
 Nuts and seeds.  
 Peanut butter.  
 Tofu.

### ***Not Gluten Free – do not eat***

Canned or frozen vegetables in sauce.  
 Vegetarian products including textured vegetable protein (TVP). Check ingredients.  
 Commercially thickened fruit pie fillings.  
 Fruit pies with wheat based pastry.  
 Check ingredients of processed varieties such as baked beans.  
 Some flavoured beer nuts may contain wheat flour.  
 Tofu burgers may contain gluten.  
 Hydrolysed vegetables protein unless checked.

## **Meat, fish, poultry and soups**

### ***Gluten Free – choose freely***

Fresh, smoked and corned.  
 Frozen without sauce, crumbs or batter.  
  
 Canned meat or fish without sauce.  
 Ham off bone, bacon, corned beef.  
 Gluten free sausages (ensure that the butcher makes these first to avoid contamination).  
 Eggs. Unflavoured tofu.  
 Homemade soups from gluten free ingredients.  
 Some commercial soups (check ingredients).  
 Homemade pizzas using allowed ingredients.

### ***Not Gluten Free – do not eat***

Meat and fish prepared or thickened with flour, batter or breadcrumbs.  
 Flavoured tunas (check ingredients)  
 Smallgoods, eg sausages, devon, processed meats and processed ham.  
 Meat pies and sausage rolls.  
 Frozen dinners.  
 Tofu burgers may contain gluten.  
 Homemade or commercial soups.  
 made with thickeners, stocks, pasta, barley or flours containing gluten.  
 Commercial pizzas.

## **Dairy products, butter, margarine and oil**

### ***Gluten Free – choose freely***

Full cream and low fat milks.  
 Fresh, UHT, evaporated, powdered and

### ***Not Gluten Free – do not eat***

Malted milk.  
 Milk flavourings such as Milo.

condensed milk.  
 Buttermilk.  
 Yoghurt and ice cream (check ingredients)  
 Junket.  
 Cream (fresh or canned).  
 Block, processed, cream and cottage cheese.  
 Ice cream (check ingredients).  
 Milk flavouring if malt and gluten free.  
 Malt free soy milk and/or those labelled gluten free.  
 Butter, margarine and oils.

Artificial cream.  
 Ice cream thickeners or flavourings that contain gluten. Ice cream cones and waffles  
 Cheese mixtures, pastes and spreads unless checked.  
 Soy milk containing malt.  
 Watch for contamination of margarine and cutting boards with breadcrumbs.

### **Condiments and other flavourings**

#### ***Gluten Free – choose freely***

Vinegar – balsamic, cider, red wine and white.  
 Some commercial mustards, salad dressings, Sauces, pickles, relishes and chutneys may be suitable.  
 Soya sauce (check ingredients).  
 Tabasco sauce.  
 Gluten free stock powders.  
 Curry paste and powder (check ingredients).  
 Gluten free gravy.  
 Tomato paste. Tahini (sesame seed paste).  
 Fresh and dried herbs and spices.  
 Jam, honey, peanut and other nut butters.  
 Pure maple and golden syrup.  
 Plain and flavoured gelatine.  
 Cocoa.  
 Flavouring essences and artificial sweeteners (check ingredients).

#### ***Not Gluten Free – do not eat***

Malt vinegar.  
 Commercial mustards, salad dressings, sauces, pickles, relishes, chutneys and salsas should be avoided unless checked.  
 BBQ salts and other flavouring mixes may contain gluten.  
 Yeast extract including Promite, Vegemite and Bonox.

### **Beverages**

Water, milk, tea, coffee, juice, cordial, soft drink Including diet, mineral water, cocoa, drinking chocolate (check ingredients)  
 Wine, sherry, whisky, bourbon, vodka,  
 Rum, vermouth, tequila.

Coffee substitutes, chocolate milk flavourings such as milo and Akta Vite. Barley based cordial  
 Beer, ale, stout

### **Snacks**

Plain corn and potato chips  
 Popcorn, plain and nut chocolate

Some flavoured savoury snacks as corn chips may contain gluten

Check labelling on all sweets as they may contain starch and starches as undeclared processing aids.

Filled chocolates (check ingredients)  
Licorice

A typical day's menu on a gluten free diet

This is a guide to the range of foods you can include in a gluten free diet. The volume of food will vary for individuals. Be aware of the need to maintain your fibre intake (aim 25 – 30 g per day) ( See high fibre diet). Women and children should include 2- 3 calcium rich foods per day.

#### Breakfast

Gluten free muesli with fresh or tinned fruit and milk

Or buckwheat porridge with dried fruit and milk.

Gluten free toast with margarine and jam, honey or peanut butter.

Tea or coffee

#### Lunch

Sandwiches made with gluten free bread with cheese or beef and salad or

Corn tortillas with salad and lean chicken

Tinned or fresh fruit with yoghurt ( check ingredients)

Water, fruit juice, tea or coffee

#### Main meal

Glass of wine, juice soft drink or water.

Chicken and vegetable stir fry with gluten free soy sauce and rice noodles,  
Thickened with potato flour.

Fruit with gluten free custard or ice cream

#### Snacks

Gluten free rice crackers with cheese and tomato or gluten free biscuits with tea or coffee

Fresh fruit or dried fruit and nuts.

#### Remember

- read labels well and watch for hidden sources of gluten
- Include a wide variety of gluten free cereals
- Always check that medications and vitamins are Gluten free
- For more detailed dietary information consult an Accredited Practising dietitian. Check with your local health centre or Hospital. Private Dietitians can be found in the yellow pages.

#### Additional Resources

The Coeliac Society of Australia provides useful information on gluten free diets for patients who have Coeliac Disease, Dermatitis Herpetiformis or medically required gluten free diet. See Gastronet patient support for contact details. There are also many local groups outside capital cities. Contact State offices for details.

An initial membership fee includes an extensive information pack, and a magazine 4 times a year which contains information on health issues, new products and recipes. The Coeliac Society also produces an Ingredient list as a guide to suitable and unsuitable ingredients. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition has recently been released.

