

Celiac Disease and the Gluten Free Diet



What is Celiac Disease (CD)?

CD is defined as a permanent inability to tolerate a protein called gluten in the diet. With this medical condition, the villi on the surface of the small intestine are damaged when gluten is ingested.

- CD affects approximately 1 in 133 Canadians.
- The symptoms appear to be unspecific and vary greatly from person to person.
- Most common symptoms include: anemia, chronic diarrhea, cramps, fatty stools, bloating, weight loss, and fatigue.
- The only treatment for CD is a strict gluten-free diet for life.



What is Gluten? Gluten is the ingredient in wheat that plays a role in leavening, forming the dough structure, and holding baked products together. Gluten is the general name for storage proteins called prolamins in various cereal grains. Prolamins are the proteins that can cause problems for some gluten sensitive individuals. Prolamins have specific names for each cereal grain, gliadin in wheat, secalin in rye, hordein in barley, and avenin in oats.

What is the Gluten Free (GF) Diet? The GF Diet eliminates the consumption of gluten to help treat Celiac Disease. High gluten foods such as wheat, rye, triticale, barley, and any foods that use any part of these grains are not consumed.

Gluten-Free Foods: Many foods are naturally gluten-free including plain meats, fish, poultry, nuts, seeds, eggs, legumes, milk, yogurt, cheese, fruits, vegetables and alternative grains and their flours.

- With increasing numbers of people diagnosed with CD, there is a rapidly growing gluten-free specialty food market in North America that offers a wide variety of products such as pizza, pastas, cereal, crackers, soups, sauces, snack foods, and ready-to-eat baked goods.
- These foods are available in health food and grocery stores and directly from gluten-free vendors. In Canada, there is a specific regulation for the term “gluten-free” and Health Canada randomly monitors products with a gluten-free claim by testing for gluten to ensure the products are safe. *This is only true for Canadian products, so be sure to read the labels!
- There are many sources of hidden gluten therefore if you, or someone you love, suffers from a gluten allergy, be sure to read the ingredients list on all food that will be consumed.

Sources of Hidden Gluten	
Rice or corn cereals	Baking powder
Baked beans	Seasonings
Imitation seafood	Candy
Dry roasted or flavoured nuts	Soy sauce
Hot dogs, luncheon meats, hamburger patties	Sauces and gravies
Canned soups, soup mixes/bases/cubes	Worcestershire sauce
Salad dressings	Communion wafers
Herbal teas, instant teas, flavoured coffees	Modified food starch
Soy, rice or nut beverages	Maltodextrin
Potato or tortilla chips	Dextrin

When shopping always read labels because items must be totally free from gluten. Use the trademark for 'gluten free' to guide you.

