



EATING WELL GLUTEN FREE DIETS

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Gluten is a protein found in cereal grains such as wheat, rye, triticale and barley. It can be found in baked items, and many processed/packaged foods contain gluten because of its binding properties.

Celiac disease is a serious condition where consuming gluten damages the inner lining of the small bowel. This reduces the body's ability to absorb much-needed nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, iron, protein, folate, and fat.

Celiac disease occurs in about 1% of the population.

Due to varied symptoms, which can also occur as a result of other health issues, Celiac disease can be difficult to diagnose. Blood tests can help screen and a biopsy of the small intestine will provide a definitive diagnosis. Symptoms of gluten intolerance vary but can include:

- anemia
- chronic diarrhea
- weight loss
- cramps
- bloating
- irritability
- fatigue

Many people cannot tolerate gluten even though they don't technically have Celiac disease. For these people, reducing or eliminating gluten leads them to feel better overall and have fewer digestive troubles.

This is referred to as having 'non-celiac gluten sensitivity.' The symptoms of this are similar to Celiac disease and also include irritable bowel syndrome, fatigue, headaches and paresthesia (tingling of the extremities). But unlike Celiac disease, there is no damage to the small bowel and the blood screening tests and/or biopsy come back normal.

Many unprocessed foods are naturally gluten free such as fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, and oils. Honey, sugar, beans, legumes and

rice are also gluten free in their natural state. Anyone with Celiac disease **MUST** read all the ingredients in the products they buy. Gluten hides in things like hydrolyzed vegetable/plant protein (HVP/HPP), malt, spelt, kamut and some drug products.

Foods with seasoning, thickeners, sauces, fillers, coatings, and added flavours can have hidden gluten too. Some products, like french fries, are more likely to have been subject to cross-contamination during cooking or production.



Always read the label – know what you're buying. Canada's labelling system is in transition and is getting better. New regulations for food allergen labelling come into effect on August 4, 2012. But be cautious. The Canadian Celiac Association recommends you look at three places on a product's label:

1. The list of ingredients
2. The 'contains' statement
3. Any allergen precautionary statements

Today's gluten-free products have improved a lot in the last few years and are readily found at most grocery stores, often in the organic sections. Many restaurants have gluten free items on their menu and in many cities you can have pizza with gluten-free crust delivered to your door.



FOR MORE
INFORMATION

Health Canada
Canadian Celiac Association

**Always consult your doctor to find out what's right for you.*