GIG Education Bulletin

Quick Start Diet Guide for Celiac Disease

Updated June 2011

What you need to know about celiac disease

Here is a quick and simple view of the gluten-free (GF) diet. Not all areas of the diet are as clear-cut as portrayed by this guide. This is intended to be used as a tool for the newly diagnosed celiac. Understanding these dietary requirements will enable the person newly diagnosed to read labels of food products and determine if a product is appropriate.

Celiac disease (CD) is a lifelong digestive disorder found in individuals who are genetically susceptible. Damage to the small intestine is caused by an immune-mediated reaction to the ingestion of gluten. This does not allow foods to be properly absorbed. Even small amounts of gluten in foods affect those with celiac disease and cause health problems. Damage can occur to the small bowel even in the absence of symptoms. Gluten is the generic name for certain types of protein contained in the common cereal grains wheat, barley, rye and their common derivatives.

ALLOWED grains and flours

Rice, corn, soy, potato, tapioca, beans, garfava, sorghum, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, arrowroot, amaranth, teff, Montina and nut flours.

NOT ALLOWED in any form

Wheat (durum, graham, kamut, semolina, spelt), rye, barley and triticale.

Labels

The key to understanding the GF diet is to become a good ingredient label reader. The following ingredients **should not** be consumed. They are derived from prohibited grains: barley, malt or malt flavoring (can be made from barley), malt vinegar (made from barley), rye, triticale, wheat (durum, graham, kamut, semolina, spelt).

Oats

Recent research shows that pure, uncontaminated oats used in moderation (1 cup cooked) are safe for most persons with celiac disease. Consult your dietitian or physician if you want to include oats in your diet.

Alcohol and vinegar

Distilled alcoholic beverages and vinegars are gluten-free. Distilled products do not contain any harmful gluten peptides. Research indicates that the gluten peptide is too large to carry over in the distillation process. This leaves the resultant liquid gluten-free. Wines are gluten-free. Beers, ales, lagers and malt vinegar are made from gluten-containing grains and are not distilled; therefore, they are not gluten free, with the exception of some GF beers that are currently available.

Labels

A label that declares a complete list of ingredients is safest. If you are unsure about a product's ingredients, avoid it or find a comparable product that is gluten-free. Labels must be read every time you purchase food. Manufacturers can change ingredients at any time. Some products remain GF for years while others do not. You may verify ingredients by calling or writing a food manufacturer and specifying the ingredient and lot number of the food in question. State your needs clearly - be patient, persistent and polite.

Foods that may contain gluten:

- Breading, coating mixes and Panko
- Broth, soup bases
- Brown rice syrup
- Candy
- Croutons
- Flour or cereal products
- Imitation bacon
- Imitation seafood
- Marinades
- Pastas
- Processed luncheon meats
- Sauces, gravies
- Self-basting poultry
- Soy sauce or soy sauce solids
- Sutffing, dressing
- Thickeners (roux)
- Communion wafers
- Herbal supplements
- Drugs and over-the-counter medications
- Nutritional supplements
- Vitamins and mineral supplements
- Playdough: a potential problem if hands are put on or in the mouth while playing with Playdough or are not washed after use.

GIG GLUTEN INTOLERANCE GROUP

If in doubt, go without!

If you are unable to verify ingredients or the ingredient list is unavailable DO NOT EAT IT. Regardless of the amount eaten, it is not worth triggering your immune system and the damage to the small intestine that occurs every time gluten is consumed, whether symptoms are present or not. Individuals may have sensitivity reactions to foods other than gluten.

Wheat free is not gluten free

Products labeled wheat free are not necessarily gluten free. They may still contain rye or barley-based ingredients that are not GF.

Contamination in food preparation

When preparing gluten-free foods, they must not come into contact with food containing gluten. Contamination can occur if foods are prepared on common surfaces or with utensils that are not thoroughly cleaned after preparing gluten-containing foods. Using a common toaster for gluten-free bread and regular bread is a common source of contamination. Flour sifters should not be shared with gluten-containing flours. Deep-fried foods cooked in oil shared with breaded products should not be consumed. Spreadable condiments in shared containers may be a source of contamination. When a person dips into a condiment a second time with the knife (used for spreading), the condiment becomes contaminated with crumbs (e.g. mustard, mayonnaise, jam, peanut butter and margarine).

Wheat flour can stay airborne for many hours in a bakery (or at home) and contaminate exposed preparation surfaces and utensils or uncovered gluten-free products. Likewise, foods not produced in a gluten-free environment have the potential to be contaminated with gluten. This may occur when machinery or equipment is inadequately cleaned after producing gluten-containing foods. Food manufacturers are required by Good Manufacturing Practices outlined in the FDA's Code of Federal Regulations to reduce the risk of contamination in manufacturing. Let common sense be your guide.

Not all adverse reactions are due to celiac disease

Lactose intolerance, food sensitivities or allergies to soy, corn or other foods or even the stomach flu are common causes of symptoms similar to celiac disease. Newly diagnosed celiacs may have trouble digesting certain foods, especially fatty foods, until the small intestine has had a chance to heal and start absorbing normally. If necessary, keep a diary of foods eaten. Read labels, remember what you ate, and listen to your body.

Attitude is everything

Like anything new, it takes time to adjust to the GF diet. It is natural to mourn old food habits for a short time. Stay focused on all the foods you can eat. Fresh fruits and vegetables are delicious and healthy. Fresh poultry, fish, meat and legumes provide protein and are naturally GF. Most dairy foods can also still be enjoyed, providing you are not lactose intolerant. GF substitutes for foods commonly made with wheat are available at grocery stores, health food stores and GF food manufacturers. Try GF waffles for breakfast, a sandwich on GF bread for lunch; and rice, corn or quinoa pasta for dinner. Your new way of eating is very satisfying!

Test before starting diet

The GF diet is a lifelong commitment and should not be started before being properly diagnosed with CD/DH. Starting the diet without complete testing is not recommended and makes diagnosis difficult. Tests to confirm CD could be inaccurate if a person were on a GF diet for a long period of time. For a valid diagnosis, gluten needs to be reintroduced. Celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disease. Screening family members is recommended. Consult your doctor for testing.

This document may be reproduced for educational purpose only.

Other helpful information is available at www.GLUTEN.net.

Advances in celiac disease are fast-paced. If this document is more than 2 years old, please visit our Web site for updated documents.

This information should not be used to diagnose or treat anemia or celiac disease. For questions about anemia and celiac disease consult your healthcare team when considering this information.

Please consider your local GIG branch as another resource.

Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG)
31214 – 124th Ave. S.E.
Auburn, WA 98092-3667

Phone: 253-833-6655
Fax: 253-833-6675

www.GLUTEN.net
info@GLUTEN.net

GIG is a nonprofit 501c3 national organization providing support for persons with gluten intolerances, in order to live healthy, productive lives. GIG Branches provide support at a local level.

To make a donation or become a volunteer to GIG, visit our Web site or call the office at 253-833-6655.