



**HyVee**

# Gluten-Free Quick Start Guide

## What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease is a lifelong digestive disorder in which genetics play a role. The small intestine is damaged by an immune response to the ingestion of gluten. When the intestine is damaged, food is not properly absorbed. Very small amounts of gluten in foods may cause damage to the intestine even when there are no symptoms. Gluten is the generic term for protein contained in certain grains such as wheat, barley, rye and their derivatives.

## Test before starting diet

The gluten-free (GF) diet is a lifelong commitment and should not be started before being properly diagnosed with celiac disease. Starting the diet without complete testing makes the diagnosis difficult. Since celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disease, screening family members is recommended. Consult your doctor for testing.

## ALLOWED grains and flours

- Rice
- Corn
- Soy
- Potato
- Tapioca
- Beans
- Fava
- Sorghum
- Quinoa
- Millet
- Buckwheat
- Arrowroot
- Amaranth
- Teff
- Montina
- Nut flours

## NOT ALLOWED in any form

- Wheat (durum, graham, kamut, semolina, spelt)
- Rye
- Barley
- Triticale

## Wheat-free is not gluten-free!

Products labeled wheat-free are not necessarily gluten-free. Wheat-free foods may contain rye or barley ingredients that are not GF.

## Labels

The key to understanding the GF diet is to become a good ingredient label reader. Some foods contain “hidden” gluten-containing ingredients. Labels must be read every time you purchase a food, as manufacturers can change ingredients at any time.

## When in doubt, go without

If you are unable to verify the ingredients in a food, DO NOT EAT IT. Even if a small amount is eaten, it is not worth triggering your immune system and damaging the small intestine.



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## Contamination during food preparation

When you prepare GF foods, be sure they do not come in contact with gluten-containing food. Contamination can occur if gluten-containing foods are prepared on the same surface or with the same utensils as GF foods. Toasters, flour sifters, deep fryers and spreadable condiment jars are common sources of contamination.

Wheat flour can stay airborne for many hours and can contaminate exposed surfaces. Also, foods not produced in a GF facility have a potential to become contaminated with gluten because equipment is inadequately cleaned after production of gluten-containing foods. Food manufacturers are required by Good Manufacturing Practices outlined in the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) section of the Code of Federal Regulations to reduce the risk of contamination in manufacturing.

## One step at a time

Starting a gluten-free diet can be overwhelming. There is a lot to know about foods, ingredients and changes in lifestyle and cooking. Take one step at a time. No one expects you to know the diet all at once.

*Step one* - Omit the obvious foods from your diet that contain the grains to be avoided (wheat, rye, oats and barley). Some of these foods include cereals, breads, pasta, desserts and beer. Try eggs or cream of rice for breakfast and substitute rice, potatoes or corn tortillas for the breads and pasta you usually eat. This step is a huge change from the “normal” diet so sit back and relax a while!

*Step two* - Begin reading labels for hidden sources of gluten in food. Learn what to watch for on labels. This step can be very confusing but don't panic – take it slowly. When at the grocery store, only read labels on one type of products at a time. For example, look at salad dressings this week but wait to look at luncheon meats until next week. Carry a paper and pen with you to write down foods you find to be safe. Some stores offer lists of gluten-free products. Go to [www.hy-vee.com](http://www.hy-vee.com) for Hy-Vee's latest GF listing.

*Step three* - Reach out and touch someone. Start calling or emailing manufacturers to find out if their products contain gluten. Now is also a good time to find a support group in your area that can offer advice.

*Step four* - Continue to fine tune. Consider items that you may not have thought of before such as medicines, mouthwash or lipstick. Consider cross-contamination issues such as toasters and shared food products like mayonnaise, margarine and jam.

