Section

Overview

Recommend

Read

Resource

WHAT IS THE DIET?

Following a gluten-free diet involves avoiding wheat, barley, rye, and all foods made with these ingredients. Reading ingredient labels for consumed foods, beverages, medications and supplements is essential to avoiding gluten.

What conditions is the gluten-free diet used for?

- Celiac disease.
- Non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS).

Why is the gluten-free diet being recommended?

A strict gluten-free diet is the only treatment available for celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS).

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease triggered by gluten ingestion, which damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. NCGS is a condition in which individuals report improvement of symptoms following the elimination of gluten from their diet. This diagnosis is only given after both celiac disease and wheat allergy are excluded.

How to read a label for gluten

Please check labels prior to consuming a product to ensure a safe gluten-free diet.

How to read a label for gluten

If a product is labeled “Gluten Free”, it is safe for people with celiac disease

Third-party certifications exist to monitor manufacturers, but thus far research shows that both labeled and certified GF foods are both safe for people with celiac disease

When a product is not labeled “Gluten Free”, you can determine if it is safe to eat by reading the ingredients label:

- Read the “Contains” allergen statement at the bottom of the label
- If wheat is listed in the “contains” statement, the product is not gluten free
- If wheat is NOT listed in the “contains” statement, you must look for the following ingredients:

I. Always Avoid:

- Wheat, wheat starch
- Rye
- Barley, brewer’s yeast
- Malt extract, malt vinegar, malt flavor

II. Avoid if product is not labeled GF:

- Oats, oat bran, oat flour
- Yeast (autolyzed or extract)
- Smoke flavor from barley
- Natural flavor from barley

Voluntary Advisory Statements

- “May contain wheat” and “processed in a facility/on equipment that processes wheat” are voluntary statements NOT regulated by FDA
- Products labeled “Gluten Free” and with a voluntary advisory statement are safe for people with celiac disease
- Research indicates that these labels are unreliable. Many products without the advisory statement are just as likely to unsafe for people with celiac disease as products with the advisory statement. Gluten contamination was found most often in products containing oats and with an advisory statement, which is why oats should only be consumed when labeled “gluten-free”

Alcohol

- Alcoholic beverages labeled “Gluten Free” are safe for those with celiac disease
- Those labeled “gluten-removed” or “processed to remove gluten” are not safe for those with celiac disease.
- Wine, fruit cider (without barley malt), and distilled liquor are all gluten free.

- Beer and other malted beverages with barley are not safe for people with celiac disease

Resources for label reading

- Websites: Celiac.org, BeyondCeliac.org, NationalCeliac.org
- Website: Glutenfreedrugs.com
- Application: Spoonful

Now it is time to meet with a GI-expert dietitian. To get more information about this topic, find a dietitian in your area using our **Find a Health Care Provider tool**.

WRITTEN BY

Janelle Smith, RD, and Sadie Nagle, RD
DIGID Disorders of the Brain Gut Interaction Workgroup ©2021

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