

Gluten-Free Diets

What is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye containing foods. Gluten is what gives breads and baked goods their structure and texture. Most people are able to digest gluten without issue, but for some the protein can cause health issues.

Who Needs a Gluten-free Diet?

- **Celiac Disease:** Children with celiac disease require a gluten-free diet. For this group, eating gluten causes an immune response and damages the lining of the small intestine. This damage affects nutrient absorption and can lead to many symptoms. Blood tests can be used to screen for celiac disease, a diagnosis is confirmed with an endoscopy and biopsy of the small intestine showing intestinal damage.
 - **Symptoms of celiac disease in children:**
 - Abdominal pain, cramping, or bloating
 - Failure to Thrive
 - Constipation
 - Diarrhea
 - Weight loss
 - Fatigue
 - Abnormal stools
 - Nutrient deficiencies
 - Anemia
 - While symptoms are common, a child with celiac disease may not have any symptoms.
- **Non-celiac gluten/wheat sensitivity**
 - Children with gluten sensitivity may have digestive symptoms such as constipation, diarrhea, and bloating but do not test positive for celiac disease.



Claiming gluten-free meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

- If using gluten-free substitutions that are within the meal pattern requirements, a Special Dietary Needs form is not needed.
 - However, serving foods outside of the meal pattern are only creditable with a completed Special Dietary Needs form that specifies the substitution(s) for the child.
- Nut flours are not considered a grain, foods made with these cannot be claimed as the grain component.

Gluten-free Grains

The meal component most affected by a restriction of gluten is the grains/bread group. Here is a list of gluten-free grains:

- Corn
- Rice
- Brown Rice WG
- Wild Rice WG
- Quinoa WG
- Oatmeal* WG
- Buckwheat WG
- Millet WG
- Sorghum WG
- Amaranth WG
- Teff WG

WG=Whole-grain

* Naturally gluten-free but often contaminated with gluten through processing. Seek out certified gluten-free oats for children with severe gluten-sensitivity or celiac disease.

What to Serve:

Do Serve	Don't Serve
Gluten-free oatmeal	Whole wheat toast
Cheerios, Rice Chex, Corn Chex, Multi-Grain Cheerios	Corn Flakes, Kix, Mini Wheats, Rice Krispies
Grilled or baked chicken	Breaded chicken/chicken nuggets
Rice or brown rice pasta	Wheat pasta, dinner roll

Keep it Separate

Gluten-free foods can be contaminated with traces of gluten very easily. Use separate utensils and cooking equipment when preparing gluten-free food alongside gluten containing food.

Resources:

- **Eat! Gluten-Free App: Available for download on the Google Play store and App store**
 - This mobile app allows you to search for gluten-free products by category and brand! The app also includes recipes and information on helpful articles and resources for gluten-free living.
- **Celiac Disease Foundation: www.celiac.org**
 - The Celiac Disease Foundation's website includes a ton of resources on how celiac disease affects health, diagnosing celiac disease, recipes, and more ideas on healthy gluten-free living!
- **Gluten Intolerance Group: www.gluten.org**
 - The Gluten Intolerance Group is another great resource for living gluten-free with articles and resources on gluten-free products, health, and lifestyle.

Sources: <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain-refined-grain/gluten-free-whole-grains>, <https://celiac.org/gluten-free-living/gluten-free-foods/>, <https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/allergy-library/celiac-disease>, and <https://gluten.org/resources/getting-started/celiac-disease-non-celiac-sensitivity-or-wheat-allergy-what-is-the-difference/>

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. (11/2015)