



Gluten-Free | FACTS

What Is Gluten?

Gluten is a protein naturally found in certain grains such as wheat, barley, rye and some oats. Foods that are made with these grains also contain gluten – that includes foods like bagels, breads, cakes, cereals, cookies, crackers, pasta, pizza, and more.

Who Should Avoid Gluten?

About three million Americans suffer from a serious medical condition called celiac disease. For someone with this disease, eating gluten-containing foods causes damage to the lining of the small intestine (where foods go after they have been eaten and digested). This damage makes it very difficult for the body to absorb nutrients from foods. Over time this damage can lead to malnourishment and possibly other complications. While there is no cure for celiac disease, the good news is that eating gluten free is the best way to prevent further damage to the small intestine. Gluten may also be avoided by those who are sensitive to it or make a personal choice to avoid it. If you think you have celiac disease, be sure to get tested before starting a gluten free diet.

Healthy Gluten-Free Eating

Many foods are generally free of gluten, unless it was added in processing. People who follow a gluten-free diet can enjoy a variety of foods, including:

Plain beef, pork and lamb	Rice, Wild Rice	Milk	Flax
Plain chicken and turkey	Quinoa	Lentils	Soy
Plain fish and shellfish	Plain fruits	Corn	Potatoes
Plain vegetables	Plain beans	Eggs	Nuts and seeds

Knowing What To Look For: Reading Labels

The best way to know if a product is gluten free is to read the ingredients label. To determine if a product contains gluten, there are six ingredients to look for:

Wheat	Barley	Rye	Oats ¹	Malt ²	Brewer's Yeast
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Looking for these grains and ingredients will help you identify products that contain gluten. You need to check labels often. Ingredients can change over time, so checking the ingredients label every time is the most accurate way to identify what is in a food or beverage product. After you have read the label and determined that the product does not contain these obvious sources of gluten, you may always contact the manufacturer to confirm.

Frequently Overlooked Foods That May Contain Gluten

Broth	Imitation seafood	Soy sauce	Candy	Marinades
Thickeners	Coating mixes	Processed meats	Croutons	Seasoning
Vegetarian meat	Sauces and gravies substitutes	Imitation bacon		

¹According to AND Evidence Based Analysis Library and NEJM, 2004; 351: 2021-2022, studies suggest that pure oats that are not cross-contaminated with wheat, barley or rye consumed in moderation can be tolerated by most people with celiac disease. Check with your health care provider to find out if this is right for you.

²A common ingredient that is a derivative of barley.