

# CELIACCanada

## Celiac is a chameleon

Unmask celiac  
Empower lives

*Plus*

MAY EVENTS ACROSS CANADA

NATALIA'S CHAMELEON STORY

GLUTEN-FREE OPTIONS IN HEALTHCARE

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# CELIAC Canada

**A MAGAZINE FOR CANADIANS WITH  
CELIAC DISEASE AND GLUTEN SENSITIVITY**

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# SPRING 2025



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# A word from our president

## TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN



As my term as President of Celiac Canada comes to an end next month at our Annual General Meeting, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the journey we've taken together—and to share a few thoughts on what's ahead before I pass the torch.

Since joining the board in June 2020, I've witnessed a remarkable transformation of this small but mighty charity. None of it would have been possible without our incredible staff team, donors, supporters, and industry partners.

We shifted away from an individual membership model to embrace our broader charitable purpose: supporting all Canadians with celiac disease. We've reinvigorated our programs for the newly diagnosed, for children, and most recently, for seniors. Our dietitians have expanded our educational resources, and our national conference now reaches thousands across the country. Our advocacy efforts are focused on affordability and accessibility, with thousands joining our calls for change. And our chapter and regional partners continue to be the heartbeat of this movement—building strong, connected communities from coast to coast.

This past year, the board of directors adopted a

new three-year strategic plan. At its heart is our commitment to building a strong and healthy organization—one that helps find, treat, and ultimately cure celiac disease. Your health remains the centre of our work, grounded in the values of belonging, integrity, and compassion. We will continue to be your champions, empowering you with trusted resources and science-backed knowledge.

Gone are the days when we believed the gluten-free diet alone was enough. Once you mastered label-reading, you were good to go—or so we thought. We now know that celiac disease is a complex autoimmune condition, and we are only beginning to understand its full impact. Thanks to your support, Celiac Canada is driving this knowledge forward, breaking down barriers, and improving access to care.

Looking ahead, we aim to be a more inclusive voice—reaching underserved communities and helping more people get diagnosed and supported. We will continue to educate primary health providers on the signs and symptoms of celiac disease and use clinical evidence to improve care and management. We plan to maintain, strengthen, and grow our programs and services to support better long-term health outcomes. This includes launching a new peer support program for older adults, helping those aged 70+ thrive at home for as long as possible. And when the time comes to transition *Continued on next page*

# “ This past year, the board of directors adopted a new three-year strategic plan — one that helps find, treat, and ultimately cure celiac disease

to care outside the home, we want safe food access to be a given—thanks to successful advocacy and education.

I’m also especially excited about the growing impact of our research efforts. It’s something we don’t often brag about—but should. Our understanding of celiac disease has deepened because of your support. Together, we’ve made strategic investments in game-changing research: from developing the mouse model to unraveling how celiac disease functions in the body, to advancing nutrition science and its role in lifelong health.

I want to thank my colleagues on the board, who over the past two years have offered knowledge,

leadership, and unwavering support to help Celiac Canada thrive. Our staff team is a powerhouse of dedication, working tirelessly to move our mission forward. I was especially proud to recognize our Executive Director, Melissa Secord, with the prestigious King Charles III Coronation Medal for her incredible leadership and eight years of service to our cause.

While I will continue serving on the board for the next two years, I’m deeply proud of all we’ve achieved together—and I can’t wait to see what we do next.

Warmest regards,  
Liz Wall



gluten free ...



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Product Finder Tool  
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# The chameleon of health

## CCA UPDATE



# MEET CELIAC CANADA'S NEW MASCOT for CELIAC DISEASE

Celiac Canada has recently unveiled a captivating new mascot to represent the complex and multifaceted nature of celiac disease: a chameleon. This decision is not just a creative choice but a thoughtful reflection of the disease's unpredictable and varied symptoms. Known for its ability to change colours and blend seamlessly into its surroundings, the chameleon is the perfect metaphor for celiac disease, which manifests in a wide range of symptoms that can make it challenging to diagnose.

### The Chameleon as a Symbol

Celiac disease has often been referred to as a “clinical chameleon” in medical circles due to its ability to mimic a variety of other conditions. This clinical comparison is particularly fitting, as celiac disease can present in numerous ways, often disguising itself as other illnesses. Its symptoms can range from digestive issues to non-digestive concerns, and it can even be asymptomatic in some cases. This variability makes diagnosing celiac disease difficult and underscores the importance of awareness and vigilance.

### The Spectrum of Symptoms

One of the key reasons for choosing a chameleon as a mascot is to highlight the wide spectrum of symptoms associated with celiac disease. These symptoms can blend into the body's biological environment, making it difficult to identify the disease unless one is thoroughly examined. Below are some examples of how celiac disease can mimic other conditions:

■ **Digestive Issues:** Diarrhea, bloating, and abdominal pain, which are common symptoms of Irritable Bowel

Syndrome (IBS).

■ **Nutrient Deficiencies:** Iron deficiency, often mistaken for anemia.

■ **Neurological Symptoms:** Migraines, brain fog, and peripheral neuropathy, which can be confused with other neurological disorders.

■ **Dermatological Signs:** Itchy skin rash (Dermatitis Herpetiformis or DH), often mistaken for other skin conditions.

■ **Hormonal Effects:** Irregular periods or infertility, frequently attributed to hormonal imbalances.

■ **Mood Disorders:** Anxiety and depression, which are common in various mental health conditions.

■ **Bone Health Issues:** Osteoporosis, osteopenia, or joint pain, which may be mistaken for other bone-related diseases.

### The Importance of Awareness

By choosing the chameleon as the face of celiac disease, Celiac Canada aims to raise awareness about the elusive nature of the disease. The chameleon

*Continued on next page*

Celiac disease has often been referred to as a “chameleon” in medical circles due to its ability to mimic a variety of other conditions



**The chameleon serves as a reminder that symptoms can often be hidden, requiring a keen eye to detect and address them**



symbolizes the need for heightened vigilance and thorough investigation when it comes to diagnosis. It serves as a reminder that symptoms can often be hidden, requiring a keen eye to detect and address them.

Celiac Canada encourages individuals who experi-

ence any of the symptoms listed above to get tested. To assist in the diagnostic process, the organization offers a symptom checker, helping people identify potential signs of celiac disease. The chameleon mascot serves as a call to action, urging everyone to be proactive about their health and seek medical advice if they suspect they might have celiac disease. ♦

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## MAY IS CELIAC AWARENESS MONTH



# UNMASK CELIAC. EMPOWER LIVES

**CELIAC IS A CHAMELEON** — it looks different in everyone, it hides in plain sight, it's often misdiagnosed. May is Celiac Awareness Month, and we're inviting you to learn the signs. Could it be celiac? Visit [celiac.ca/symptomchecker](https://celiac.ca/symptomchecker) and uncover the truth. Help raise awareness this May by supporting those living with celiac.

**UNMASK CELIAC** – we can lift the disguise, reveal the truth and call attention to what's often missed. **EMPOWER LIVES** – through diagnosis, support and awareness. Learn more at [celiac.ca](https://celiac.ca). ♦

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# Natalia's journey

## PATIENT STORY

# UNMASKING CELIAC DISEASE and finding hope

You might relate quite personally to this... Feeling sick every day of your life – exhausted, hurting, and confused. But no matter how desperately you look for answers, they're nowhere to be found.

That's what happened to young Natalia\*. Back in Soviet Moldova, food was scarce. But for Natalia, almost every bite – bread, pasta, porridge – meant unbearable illness.

No one knew why. Doctors dismissed her, some saying it was "in her head." But at 37 weeks pregnant, Natalia faced a terrifying emergency when she was rushed into surgery for a placental abruption. Doctors feared for her life – and her baby's...

Her husband was allowed into the operating room – for just a moment – to say goodbye. Thankfully, Natalia and her child survived. But barely.



ISTOCK

It took agonizing, uncertain, exhausting years for Natalia to finally discover the truth behind her unending misery: celiac disease.

Today, Natalia lives in Canada, where she found the resources, guidance, and support she desperately needed from Celiac Canada.

But for so many, the diagnosis comes too late... or not at all. That's because celiac disease is

like a chameleon. The symptoms are subtle, varied, and often misdiagnosed – mistaken for stress, indigestion, or even pregnancy complications blamed on "bad luck."

You can help change all this by making a gift this Celiac Disease Awareness Month when your donation will go twice as far to help reduce diagnosis times. [Donate.](#) [Read more patient stories.](#) ♦

*\*Name changed for privacy.*

# May Awareness events

## NATIONAL+CHAPTER events

**May is Celiac Awareness Month! We have national events as well as chapter events lined up! Connect with others and enjoy fun gluten-free activities. Don't miss out on this chance to raise awareness and support each other. Mark your calendar and join us this May!**

### NATIONAL EVENTS

**May 1st**



■ Kids colouring contest is open! Have a chance to win a prize! It's easy! [Download one of our colouring sheets](#), colour it in and send us a photo! The winner will be announced May 31.

**May 10 – 11th**

■ Our annual Give-A-Thon begins! Look out for Power Hours on our social media channels where you can double your dollar. All to help us, find, treat and cure you,

our celiac community. Thanks to Promise Gluten-Free for partnering with us on this initiative.

**May 16th**

■ It's International Celiac Disease Awareness Day! Check out events happening across the country. The international community is coming together to #ShineALightOnCeliac. Iconic buildings all over the world, including Toronto's CN Tower and Toronto sign, Charlottetown City Hall, Edmonton's Legislature and Vancouver's Science World, will be illuminated green at dusk to raise awareness. Be sure to share with us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter how you are shining a



CN Tower, Toronto, ON

light on celiac.

■ Kids Teach Kids: It's a fun, nationwide day where kids take the lead in teaching their friends and schools all about celiac disease. [Visit our Kids Teach Kids](#) day to download resources and activities so you can raise awareness in your school! Sponsored by O'Doughs.

**May 21st**

■ Gluten-Free 101 [Join our Gluten-Free 101 webinar](#) where we guide you and help you master your gluten free diet.

**May 28th**

■ More Than Food: Exploring the Mental Health Impacts of Celiac Disease. Living with celiac disease affects more than just diet; it impacts mental health too. [Join our free webinar](#) to learn about its emotional and neurological effects, coping strategies, and support tools.

*Continued on next page*



### CHAPTER EVENTS

#### [Celiac Edmonton Chapter](#)

Happy 40th Anniversary to the Celiac Edmonton Chapter!

#### May 8th

■ Gluten Free Chinese Buffet at The Lingnan, 6:00 PM  
10582 104 St. NW. [Register here](#)

#### May 9

■ Jerry Forbes Centre Career and Volunteer Fair, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Hoping to attract volunteers to support Celiac Edmonton

#### May 10

■ Celiac Kids Program: Magic May  
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM  
Jerry Forbes Centre

#### May 15

■ 100% Gluten Free Dinner Event  
Continental Treat Fine Bistro,  
6:00 PM  
Jasper Ave. and 97 St.

■ Pedal Pub, 8:45 PM – 11:00 PM  
Start at Epic Market up to 30 riders,  
gluten free beer served, restaurant  
stops for GF snacks, sober drivers.

#### May 17

■ Celiac Disease Awareness Table  
7:30 AM – 3:00 PM  
Old Strathcona Farmer's Market

#### May 24

■ Celiac Youth Club  
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM  
Cryptic Characters

#### May 27

■ GF Living 101 Program: Grocery Store Edition  
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  
Community Natural Foods ♦

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BAKEHOUSE



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\*Voted most trusted gluten-free bread brand (in a tie) by Canadian shoppers based on the 2025 BrandSpark® Canadian Trust Study.

# Shine a Light events

## INTERNATIONAL CELIAC AWARENESS DAY LIGHT-UP EVENTS

**It's the seventh year celebrating #ShineALight on celiac disease, where famous landmarks are lit up green. Celiac Canada started the idea in 2018, and it's now spread worldwide**

We encourage you to visit your local shine a light location, and share pictures on social media using #ShineALightOnCeliac and #celiaccanada

### NATIONAL LOCATIONS

#### May 1st

- Ottawa Sign, Byward Market, ON
- Rogers Centre, Ottawa, ON
- Winnipeg Sign, The Forks, MB
- The Esplanade Riel, Winnipeg, MB

#### May 15th

- BC Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC
- St. John's City Hall, St. John's, NL

#### May 16th

- Toronto Sign, Toronto, ON
- CN Tower, Toronto, ON
- Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, ON
- Alberta Legislature Building, Edmonton, AB
- Walterdale Theatre, Edmonton, AB
- Strathcona Community Hall Tower, Sherwood



**St. John's City Hall, NL**

- Park, AB
- Charlottetown City Hall, Charlottetown, PEI
- Summerside City Hall, Summerside, PEI
- Moncton City Hall, Moncton, NB
- Downing Street, Moncton, NB
- Downtown Place, Moncton, NB

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Share pictures using #ShineALight  
OnCeliac and #CeliacCanada



Science World, Vancouver BC

- Dieppe City Hall, Dieppe, NB
- Avenir Center, Moncton, NB
- White Rock Pier, White Rock, BC
- Canada Place, Vancouver, BC
- Vancouver Convention Center, Vancouver, BC
- BC Place, Vancouver, BC
- Port Moody City Hall, Port Moody, BC
- Vancouver City Hall, Vancouver, BC
- Burrard Street Bridge, Vancouver, BC
- The Bastion, Nanaimo, BC
- Surrey Civic Plaza, Surrey, BC
- The Langford Station, Victoria, BC

May 20th

- Science World, Vancouver, BC

\*For the latest event information please visit: [Upcoming events and activities - Celiac Canada](#)

#ShineALightOnCeliac around the world  
May 16th ♦

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# Growing up celiac

KIDS TEACH KIDS DAY

## EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION, **one lesson at a time**



### **WHAT IS KIDS TEACH KIDS DAY?**

Mark your calendars for May 16, 2025—it's Kids Teach Kids Day! It's a fun, nationwide day where kids take the lead in teaching their friends and schools all about celiac disease.

Celiac Canada offers fun, helpful resources to support students, parents, teachers, and schools in building a more celiac-aware and inclusive place to learn and grow.

### **HOW TO JOIN THE FUN ON KIDS TEACH KIDS DAY!**

#### **Pick your date (or use ours!)**

Celebrate on May 16, 2025, or choose a day during May that works best for your school or class.

#### **Choose your activity**

- Give a short presentation about celiac disease
- Make posters or artwork to hang in the hallway
- Put on a skit about what it's like to live gluten-free
- Create a short video or slideshow to share with friends

#### **Wear green or a celiac shirt**

Show your support loud and proud! Rally your class or school to wear green (the official colour of celiac)  
*Continued on next page*



Students from 2024 Kids Teach Kids Day



awareness) or a celiac awareness shirt. It's an easy, visible way to spark curiosity and start conversations about celiac disease!

### Share Awareness Resources

Help everyone get celiac-smart by sharing our fun and free resources with your classmates, teachers, school staff, and parents. The more we all know, the more supportive we can be!

Visit [www.celiac.ca/kidsteachkids](http://www.celiac.ca/kidsteachkids) for

- A downloadable presentation kit
  - Printable posters & activity sheets
  - Tips for talking about celiac with classmates
- And more!

We'd love to see how your class gets involved! If you share your activities online, be sure to tag @CeliacCanada and use the hashtag #KidsTeachKids so we can celebrate with you and help spread awareness. ♦



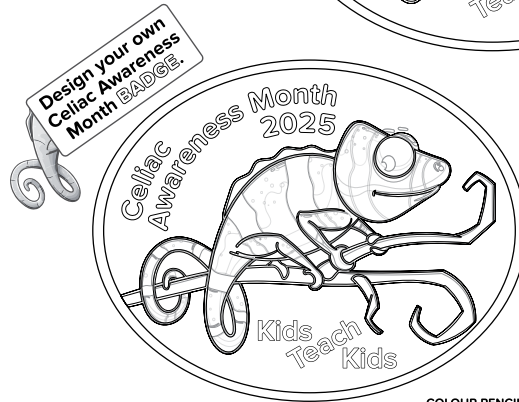
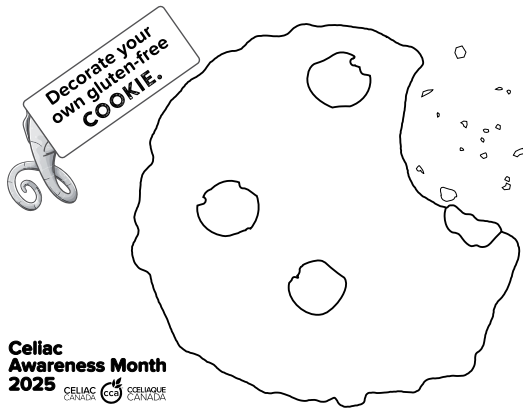
**Help everyone get celiac-smart with our free resources!**



# COLOURING CONTEST

Pick your favourite sheet and follow It-Be's instructions!  
Let your creativity flow and send your masterpieces to us at [communications@celiac.ca](mailto:communications@celiac.ca) or post them on social media and tag @ccaceliac. [Join the fun here!](#)

LET'S MAKE LIVING WITH CELIAC FUN AND EMPOWERING!



CRAYONS

COLOUR PENCILS

## I'M STILL ME! Kids activity book

A fun activity book for kids to fill in and learn self-confidence living with celiac. Drawing, colouring in, spot the difference, and more!

[Get your booklet here!](#) ♦



Celebrate Celiac Awareness Month with It-Be the Chameleon by your side!



# Our post election strategy

## CELIAC CANADA'S UPDATE

# ADVOCATING for AFFORDABILITY and ACCESS

**After a disappointing end to our federal petition last fall—cut short by the proroguing of Parliament—we were more determined than ever to have our voices heard during the federal election. More than 5,058 individuals joined us in advocating for affordability and tax fairness by sending letters to all major party leaders. We shared targeted election messaging with local candidates and spoke out in media outlets across the country. You also showed the real cost of living with celiac disease by sharing your “mounds of receipts,” underscoring the unfair financial burden with little return.**

We highlighted the story of Andy Carnovale of Ontario, who has been audited twice over a mere \$300—and was required to submit 60 pages of photocopied receipts each time. Andy's story reflects the frustration shared by many Canadians with celiac disease: navigating an overwhelming amount of red tape for minimal tax relief, despite the significant cost of maintaining a medically necessary gluten-free diet. Now that the election has concluded and Mark Carney is Prime Minister, we're pivoting to our post-election strategy.

Guided by our Advocacy Working Group, we're launching a number of initiatives to continue advancing affordability and access to safe food for all Canadians living with celiac disease:

- Send letters of congratulations to Members of Parliament and incoming Ministers in key portfolios—Health, Finance, and Revenue
- Invite key Ministers to join a “Celiac Tour” to experi-

ence the day-to-day realities of life with celiac disease

- Launch Petition #2: a new national petition to the House of Commons
- Submit recommendations for the upcoming federal budget and fall economic statement
- Build relationships with new Parliamentary Committees on Health and Finance
- Re-establish the All-Party Celiac Caucus to drive awareness and policy change

Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved. Together, we can move the needle on real affordability for Canadians living with celiac disease. ♦





**CELIAC CANADA'S UPDATE: HONOURING EXCELLENCE**

# CELEBRATING CELIAC CANADA'S FINEST



Meet the 51 remarkable recipients of the King Charles III Coronation Medal for their outstanding contributions to our celiac community

Celiac Canada had been selected to nominate and award 51 individuals for the prestigious King Charles III Coronation Medal. This medal honours Canadians who have made significant contributions to Canada or their communities. The recipients are celebrated for their achievements, dedication, and commitment to the well-being of Canadian society. The honourees were recognized at ceremonies across Canada before March 31, 2025, with support from O'Dough's a champion of the gluten-free community.

[Learn more about each recipient](#)

**Recipients:**

- 1 Michael Abbott
- 2 Alexandar Anca, RD.
- 3 Robert Beddie
- 4 Norm Berberich
- 5 Jerry Bigam
- 6 Janet Bolton
- 7 Dr. Decker Butzner
- 8 Shelley Case, RD.
- 9 Janet Dalziel
- 10 Jessica Danford
- 11 Amy Davis
- 12 Sean Davis
- 13 Christa Dubesky
- 14 Don Duerksen
- 15 Trenea Duncan



Jessica Danford and Janet Dalziel receive their medals from Doris Foster, Vice President of the Board of Directors.



**King Charles Medal Ceremony in Ontario, March, 2025.**



- 16 Margaret Duthie
- 17 Claude Gaudet
- 18 Dr. Dominica Gidrewicz
- 19 Dr. Samuel Godefroy
- 20 Dr. Patrick Godet
- 21 Julie Greene
- 22 Lance Hill
- 23 Janet Hilson
- 24 Sue Jennett
- 25 Mark Johnson
- 26 Roberta Kramchynsky
- 27 Edith Lalanne
- 28 Nicole LeBlanc
- 29 Lynda Marie Neilson
- 30 Inez Martincevic, RD.
- 31 Jo Anne Murray
- 32 Sue Newell
- 33 Tracy Perry
- 34 Dr. Maria Ines Pinto-Sanchez
- 35 Dr. Olga Pulido
- 36 RonniLyn Pustil
- 37 Dr. Mohsin Rashid
- 38 Bev Ruffo
- 39 Melissa Secord, CAE
- 40 Dr. Jocelyn Silvester
- 41 Dr. Connie Switzer
- 42 Dr. Justine Turner
- 43 Leo Turner
- 44 Val Vaartnou
- 45 Dr. Elena Verdu
- 46 Dr. Ralph Warren
- 47 Ari Weinberg
- 48 Dayna Weiten, RD.
- 49 June Williams
- 50 Anne Wraggett
- 51 Marion Zarkadas, RD. ♦

**Team Celiac celebrates Melissa Secord (centre) and Julie Greene (right) with their medals.**



**Dr. Elena Verdu, Bev Ruffo and Bev's son celebrate community and history together.**

**Made Possible by O'Doughs**

# Travelling with celiac disease



TRAVEL; CREATE UNFORGETTABLE GLUTEN-FREE EXPERIENCES

## A GLUTEN-FREE GLOBETROTTER'S GUIDE

ERIN SMITH

**Travelling with celiac disease can feel like an uphill climb. Just like hiking to the top of a mountain, preparation, knowledge, and (celiac) confidence can turn your gluten-free travels into a rewarding and memorable experience.**

### **Prepare and research your destination**

The key to travelling with celiac disease is preparation. Once you pick your destination, it's time to begin! Start researching for your trip weeks or even months

in advance. The more you prepare yourself ahead of time, the more empowered you will feel as your departure date approaches.

*Continued on next page*

# “ I had the incredible opportunity to learn how to make gluten-free dumplings with a group of international women – Erin Smith

ISTOCK PHOTOS

Look for local restaurants with gluten-free menus, hotels and B&Bs that can accommodate dietary needs, supermarkets, pharmacies, and even hospitals. Save all of these locations on a Google Map for easy access on the go. It's better to have too many options than to find yourself without any gluten-free food choices along the way.

Familiarize yourself with local ingredients and food preparation methods. Some cuisines are naturally more gluten-free friendly than others. Understanding traditional dishes will help set realistic expectations about what you can and cannot eat. Doing this research from the comfort of your home, before you start traveling, will reduce the mental load during your trip.

## Connect, explore, and be curious

Connecting with locals is a fantastic way to immerse yourself in a new culture while also ensuring a celiac friendly dining experience. Thanks to social media and online communities, you can engage with people living with celiac disease across the globe. Search for gluten-free bloggers or local celiac support groups in your destination city. Their insider tips might lead you to the best gluten-free meals of your trip.

Local chapters of national organizations, such as Celiac Canada's regional groups, can also be helpful resources. These groups often have ready-made lists of gluten-free restaurants and local products to guide you along the way.

“When I travelled to Singapore in 2018, I reached out to the Gluten Free Singapore Support Group on Facebook. One of the founding members, Karen Horan, not only shared a list of gluten-free friendly eateries but also invited me to a support group event at her home. I had the incredible opportunity to learn how to make gluten-free dumplings with a group of international women who understood the challenges of living and



travelling with celiac disease. It was one of my most memorable travel experiences, thousands of miles from home yet enjoying a safe gluten-free meal with new friends”

Travel is about more than just food. It is about embracing new traditions, customs, and daily life. Visit local markets, learn a few key phrases in the local language (please, thank you, and gluten-free go a long way!), and engage with the culture. For example, consider taking a local cooking class which allows you to prepare your own gluten-free meal while learning about regional cuisine.

Stepping outside of your comfort zone can be daunting, but don't let celiac disease or the fear of the unknown hold you back. With careful planning and an open mind, you can safely explore the world with celiac disease and create unforgettable gluten-free experiences. ♦

*Erin Smith is a passionate advocate for individuals with celiac disease and the founder of Gluten-Free Globetrotter. Diagnosed with celiac disease in 1981, she has spent her life navigating a gluten-free lifestyle and inspiring others to do the same. You can find Erin at her website [www.glutenfree-globetrotter.com](http://www.glutenfree-globetrotter.com) and on Instagram @glutenfreeglobetrotter.*

# Dear Dietitian

## NUTRITION

# I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CELIAC— now what?

Dear Dietitian,

I was recently diagnosed with celiac disease after a positive blood test. My doctor told me to “just go gluten free” and sent me on my way. I haven’t seen a specialist or a dietitian, and I’m feeling totally overwhelmed.

What should I be doing now? – *Newly Diagnosed & Confused*

**Dear Newly Diagnosed,**

First of all, thank you for your question—and please know, you’re not alone. What you’ve described is something we hear far too often. A diagnosis of celiac disease can feel like your world just flipped upside down, and being told to “just go gluten free” without support, education or follow-up isn’t enough. You deserve better.

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune condition, not a food trend or a simple dietary choice. The gluten-free diet is the only treatment, yes—but it’s a complex, lifelong commitment that goes far beyond swapping your bread. Understanding how to follow it safely, how to avoid cross-contact, how to manage your nutrition, and how to

monitor your long-term health all require guidance and support.

**Step 1: Confirm the diagnosis**

If your doctor diagnosed you based on blood work alone, it’s important to know that **the gold standard for diagnosing celiac disease is a small intestinal biopsy**. Positive blood tests (such as tTG-IgA or EMA) are highly suggestive but not definitive on their own. A biopsy provides clear evidence of intestinal damage and confirms the diagnosis.

If you’ve already started a gluten-free diet, there’s no need to worry — but it’s important to consult your healthcare provider to determine if additional diagnostic testing is necessary. A referral to

a gastroenterologist is key, especially for proper assessment and follow-up. And remember, it’s important not to cut out gluten from your diet before completing the blood test and biopsy. These tests require you to be on a gluten-containing diet to be accurate.

**Step 2: Build your support team**

Managing celiac disease is not a solo journey. Ideally, you’ll benefit from a care team that includes:

- **Your family doctor** – for initial screening, coordinating care and routine follow-up.
- **A gastroenterologist** – for confirming the diagnosis, evaluating your gut health, and monitoring for complications.
- **A registered dietitian** – ideally

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one who specializes in celiac disease, to help you understand label reading, cross-contact, nutritional needs, and living well gluten free.

Additional healthcare professionals who may play a role in your care include:

- **A psychologist or mental health professional** – to help manage the emotional and social impact of a chronic condition.
- **A social worker** – especially if you're navigating food insecurity, accommodations at work or school or financial stress.
- **An endocrinologist or other specialists** – if you have associated autoimmune conditions like thyroid disease or type 1 diabetes.

Everyone's celiac journey is unique-and the list of professionals who may be in your care can vary.

At Celiac Canada, we strongly advocate for **interdisciplinary care**. However, we also understand that it's not always possible to have a full team of medical professionals by your side. That's why we're committed to supporting you every step of the way. Our free [Gluten-Free 101](#) sessions, [Newly Diagnosed Pathway](#), and [educational webinars](#) are designed to help you navigate the *Continued on next page*



medical, emotional, social, and financial aspects of living with celiac disease — empowering you to manage your health with confidence.

### Step 3: Educate yourself and monitor your health

Once diagnosed, there are a few key things to discuss with your healthcare provider:

■ **Baseline bloodwork** – including iron, vitamin D, B12, calcium, and other nutrients that may be depleted due to malabsorption.

■ **Follow up TTG blood tests** – recommended every 6 months following diagnosis until the numbers have normalized and then every 1 – 2 years thereafter.

■ **Bone density testing** – especially if you're an adult, have signs of metabolic bone disease, have malabsorption or other risk factors for osteoporosis.

■ **Screening for related conditions** – like thyroid disease, liver disease, type 1 diabetes, or other autoimmune conditions.

■ **Testing for first-degree family members** – as celiac disease is hereditary.

### Step 4: Be your own advocate

One of the most empowering things you can do after diagnosis is **advocate for yourself**. Unfortunately, not all healthcare providers are familiar with the complexities of celiac disease or the



**One of the most empowering things you can do after diagnosis is advocate for yourself.**

**Unfortunately, not all healthcare providers are familiar with the complexities of celiac disease or the importance of follow-up care**

importance of follow-up care. If you feel like your concerns are being dismissed or your questions aren't being answered—speak up.

Ask for referrals. Request copies of your bloodwork. Bring credible resources with you. It's okay to seek a second opinion. You are the expert on your body, and you deserve to be heard.

### Step 5: Use trusted resources

There's a lot of misinformation and many of the responses are based on US, not Canadian, guidelines. At Celiac Canada, we've created free, evidence-based tools to support you. Our [Newly Diagnosed Pathway Program](#) walks you through everything you need to know—from label reading, grocery shopping and cooking to navigating travel and dining out. Plus, we'll mail a welcome kit with our most popular resources directly to your door. You can find it on our website at [www.celiac.ca](http://www.celiac.ca).

### You're not alone

Living with celiac disease can feel overwhelming at first—but with the right information and support, it gets easier. You deserve proper care, a confirmed diagnosis, and the tools to thrive, not just survive. You've taken the first step by asking questions. Keep asking. Keep advocating. And remember: we're here to help. ♦

– *Caleigh McAulay, RD*  
*Registered Dietitian, Health Promotion & Research Manager*  
*Celiac Canada*

## Symptom checklist

- ✓ Weight loss
  - ✓ Poor Appetite
  - ✓ Chronic Constipation
  - ✓ Extreme Fatigue
- and so many more...

Take the first step  
towards better  
health with Celiac  
Canada's Symptom  
Checklist.

Check your  
symptoms now!



## Newly Diagnosed with Celiac Disease?



The Celiac Canada  
is here to help. Sign up at  
[Celiac.ca/NewlyDiagnosed](https://celiac.ca/NewlyDiagnosed)



# The Stellar Journey



CERTIFIED GLUTEN FREE: A GLOBAL STANDARD GLUTEN-FREE PARTNER

## EMPOWERING HEALTHY

Stellar Eats is revolutionizing the way we think about healthy eating. Founded by an all-female team, Stellar Eats aims to shift the conversation from appearance-focused marketing to empowering, enjoyable, and guilt-free nourishment. Their baking mixes are not only delicious but also cater to various dietary needs, being gluten-free, grain-free, dairy-free, plant-based, paleo-friendly, vegan, kosher, and non-GMO. With a collection of 10 different full-size baking mixes and a new line of single-serving instant treats, Stellar Eats is making healthy eating simple and accessible. Let's dive into the story behind Stellar Eats and learn more about their commitment to quality and innovation.

**Stellar Eats is revolutionizing the way we think about healthy eating.  
Stellar Eats is making healthy eating simple and accessible.**



# EATING **with Stellar Eats**

**Please tell us the origin story of Stellar Eats.**

From a young age, our all-female founding team noticed that marketing from snack brands was flooded with messages suggesting that the purpose of eating nourishing foods was solely to look a certain way.

Our team's mission is to shift the conversation about healthy eating, making it empowering, enjoyable, and guilt-free.

The Stellar Eats baking mixes are gluten-free, grain-free, dairy-free, plant-based, paleo-friendly, vegan, kosher, and non-GMO. Our collec-

tion includes 10 different full-size baking mixes: Banana Bread + Muffin, Coffee Cake, Carrot Cake, Fudge Brownie, Biscuit + Scone, Pancake and Waffle, Pizza Dough, Chocolate Cupcake, Chocolate Chip Cookies, and Double Chocolate Chip Cookie. The mixes are *Continued on next page*

STELLAR EATS PHOTOS



STELLAR EATS PHOTOS

incredibly simple to prepare! We also recently launched a new line of single-serving, instant treats. Available in three flavours—Fudge Brownie, Banana Bread, and Carrot Cake—these mug cakes are ready in just 75 seconds! These instant treats provide a quick and convenient mini-size serving, offering a great alternative to our

full-size mixes that yield 10-14 servings. All our products are made with eight (or fewer) real food ingredients and are designed to be delicious, simple, and perfect for everyday enjoyment.

We have heard from countless happy customers that our gluten-free products are the best

they have ever tasted.

**In terms of process, what are some of the steps you undertake to keep food ingredients gluten-free? Where do you source your ingredients?**

Selecting gluten-free ingredients was a key priority for us when developing our recipes. We only work with certified gluten-free manufacturers as well as use BRCGS gluten-free ingredients. We source our ingredients from a Canadian supplier in Montreal.

**Where can customers find your products? Or how can they buy them?**

We sell our products on our website, [www.stellareats.com](http://www.stellareats.com). Use promo code: BRCGS for 20% off! Other great retailers include well.ca and natuamarket.ca. Loblaws and Sobeys carry a handful of our products at stores across Canada. Whole Foods Market is another partner that carries an extensive selection of our mixes. Local to Ontario, Healthy Planet also

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Three female founders of Stellar Eats: Stella Vanstone (left), Michelle Boigon (middle), Emma Kula (right)



carries a wide assortment of our mixes.

**What is your most popular product with customers and why?**

Our best seller is our Banana Bread and Muffin mix. It is a quintessential everyday staple/treat that can be enjoyed as a cake or as muffins, and a delicious fan favourite! That said, our mixes are so versatile, many can be made with a sweet or savory twist, so there are ways to incorporate many of our mixes into everyday life, so that's a tough question to answer.

**What new gluten-free products can we expect from your brand soon?**

Our instant treat line of singles is brand new. It's brought innovation to the baking aisle and is unique to the shelf in Canada. As for the future, we have a new full-size mix dropping in the summer and a new one rolling out for the fall as well! Follow us at [@stellar\\_eats](https://www.instagram.com/stellar_eats) for all the details! ♦



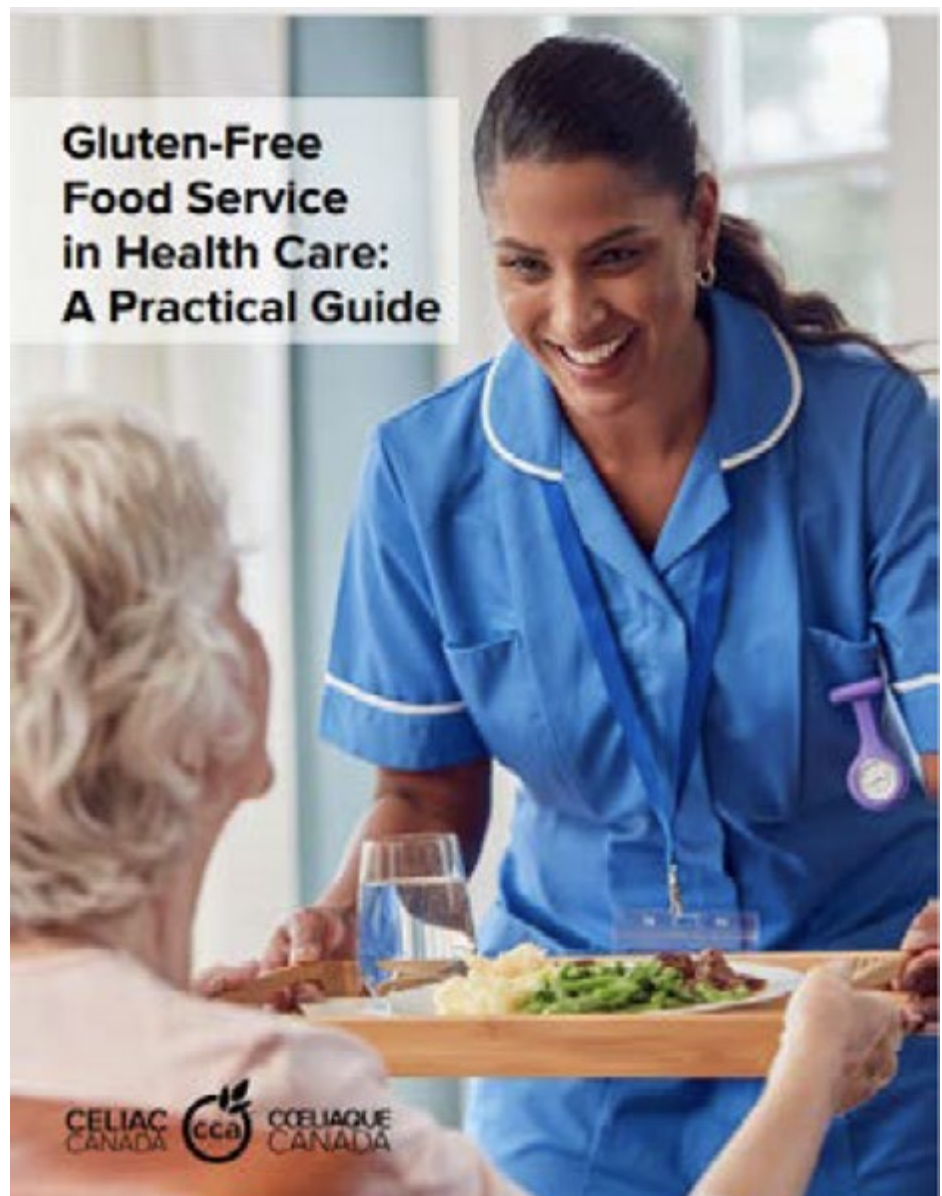
# Gluten-free food service

NUTRITION: NOURISHING A SAFER FUTURE FOR VULNERABLE PATIENTS

## Celiac Canada + Partners to expand gluten-free options in healthcare

In response to the growing need for gluten-free options in healthcare and long-term care settings, Celiac Canada has partnered with Conagra Brands Canada and Sysco to launch a comprehensive initiative centred around the *Gluten-Free Food Service in Health Care: A Practical Guide*

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# This partnership represents a shared commitment to advocacy, education, and real-world solutions for those ... on a strict gluten-free diet

For Canadians living with celiac disease, accessing safe and reliable gluten-free food is not just a matter of preference—it's a medical necessity. For seniors and those in need of hospitalization are the most at risk because of the reduced ability to self-advocate. In response to the growing need for gluten-free options in healthcare and long-term care settings, Celiac Canada has partnered with Conagra Brands Canada and Sysco to launch a comprehensive initiative centred around the [Gluten-Free Food Service in Health Care: A Practical Guide](#).

This essential resource, developed by Celiac Canada alongside healthcare food service professionals and dietitians, aims to empower food service providers with the tools and knowledge needed to safely prepare and serve gluten-free meals. Through this collaboration, Conagra Brands and Sysco – both national leading food service providers - are taking an active role in supporting the celiac community, ensuring that individuals in hospitals, retirement homes, and long-term care facilities receive nutritious, gluten-free meals that meet their dietary needs.

“We have heard nightmare stories over the years of seniors who have suffered and some prematurely dy-

“  
**We are pleased  
to have two great  
partners – Conagra  
Brands and Sysco – to  
help break the barriers and improve  
health outcomes for  
our most vulnerable**

– *Melissa Secord,  
Executive Director of Celiac  
Canada*

ing in care because of the lack of access to safe food in long term care and hospitals due to lack of education and awareness,” says Melissa Secord, Executive Director of Celiac Canada. “We are pleased to have two great partners to help break the barriers and improve health outcomes for our most vulnerable.”

## **EMPOWERING SAFE GLUTEN-FREE DINING**

**The Gluten-Free Food Service in Health Care Guide** is a comprehensive resource designed to help healthcare providers navigate every stage of gluten-free food service. It covers essential topics such as menu planning,

ingredient sourcing, cross-contamination prevention, and best practices for food preparation and service. The guide also includes dedicated sections for key team members—nutrition managers, registered dietitians, chefs, and support staff—outlining their roles in ensuring safe gluten-free dining.

As part of this initiative, Conagra Brands' support will help distribute the guide to food service professionals across the country along with education. The partnership includes teaming with DN Hospital's Chef, Daryl Neamtu, who will bring the guide to life with innovative recipes featuring Conagra Brands Canada products to showcase innovative gluten-free meal solutions tailored for healthcare settings.

## **A COMMITMENT TO A SAFER FUTURE**

This partnership represents a shared commitment to advocacy, education, and real-world solutions for those who rely on a strict gluten-free diet. Through the **Gluten-Free Food Service in Health Care Guide**, healthcare providers are gaining the tools needed to ensure **safe, high-quality, and nutritious gluten-free meals** for patients and residents across Canada.

For more details and to access the guide, visit [celiac.ca](http://celiac.ca). ♦

# Research update

## LEADING GASTROENTEROLOGY RESEARCH

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW)

The annual Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW) scientific meeting took place in Quebec City from February 28 to March 2. This event showcases leading gastroenterology research from across the country. One notable presentation featured results from the State of Celiac Disease in Canada Survey, delivered by Dr. Donald Duerksen on behalf of the State of Celiac Disease in Canada working group.

### UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC GRADIENT IN CELIAC DISEASE

#### Background

Previous research suggests that individuals with celiac disease (CeD) who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or food insecure may struggle to adhere to the gluten-free diet (GFD) and face nutritional challenges. However, less is known about how other aspects of the disease experience may vary by income level in Canada.

#### Aim

To examine how the celiac disease experience differs across income groups in Canada.

#### Methods

In late 2022, the State of Celiac Disease in Canada Survey col-

**Previous research suggests that individuals with celiac disease (CeD) who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or food insecure may struggle to adhere to the gluten-free diet (GFD) and face nutritional challenges. However, less is known about how other aspects of the disease experience may vary by income level in Canada**

lected responses from individuals living with CeD nationwide. Participants provided information on their symptoms, diagnostic journey, comorbidities, adherence to the gluten-free diet, and demographic background. Reported symptoms were categorized as gastrointestinal (n=10), non-gastrointestinal (n=15), and

neuropsychiatric (n=5).

#### Key Findings

■ Individuals in lower income groups reported a greater number of symptoms both before and after diagnosis.

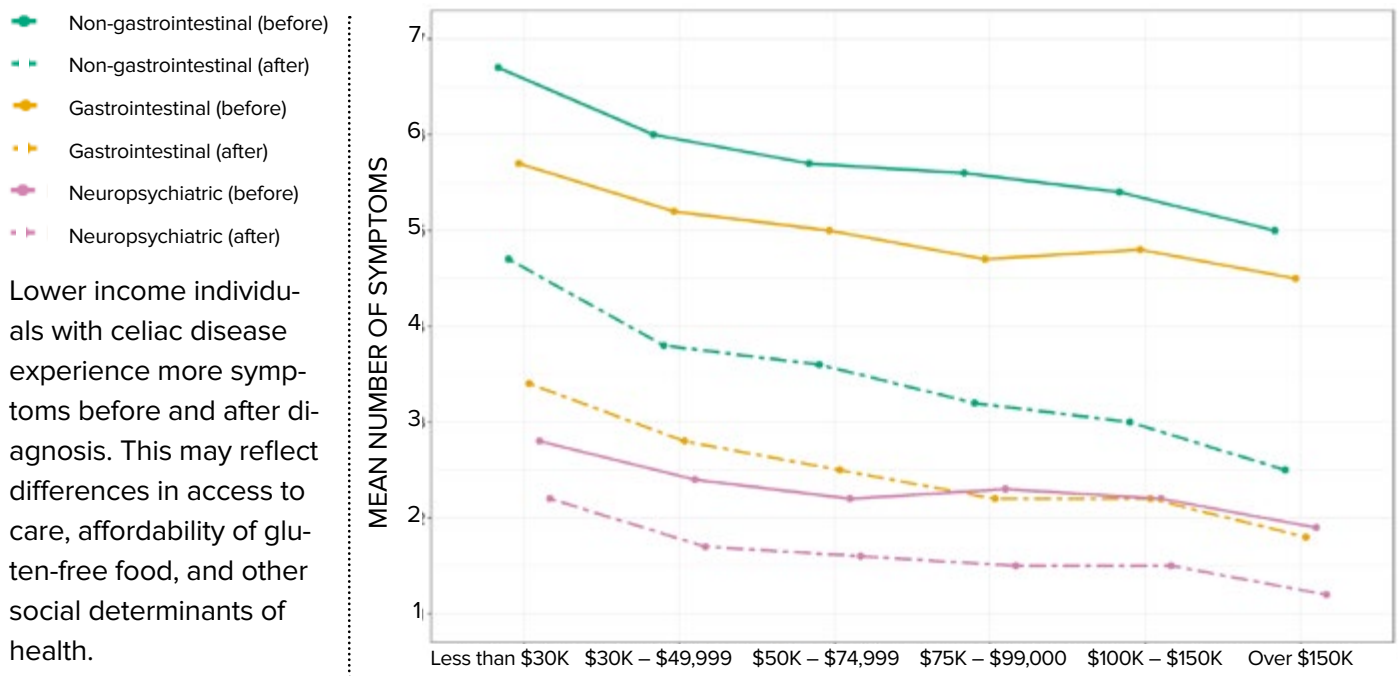
■ There was a higher prevalence of comorbidities among lower

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# This research underscores the need to better understand and address the economic disparities in celiac disease management

## SYMPTOM BURDEN BY INCOME LEVEL BEFORE AND AFTER CELIAC DISEASE DIAGNOSIS

This chart displays the average number of self-reported symptoms across different income levels, categorized into gastrointestinal, non-gastrointestinal, and neuropsychiatric symptoms, both before and after diagnosis.



Lower income individuals with celiac disease experience more symptoms before and after diagnosis. This may reflect differences in access to care, affordability of gluten-free food, and other social determinants of health.

Data was collected from the 2022 State of Celiac Disease in Canada Survey

income participants.

■ Self-reported gluten consumption did not differ significantly across income groups.

### Discussion

Several factors may explain the greater symptom burden among lower income individuals with celiac disease.

Before diagnosis, these individuals may face barriers to health-

care access, delay seeking care, or consume diets higher in gluten due to cost or availability. After diagnosis, limited access to high-quality gluten-free food—often more expensive or less available—may contribute to ongoing symptoms. These foods may be higher in fat and lower in fresh produce or may pose a higher risk of gluten contamination.

### Conclusion

This research underscores the need to better understand and address the economic disparities in celiac disease management.

Future efforts should aim to improve care and support for those facing the greatest challenges—particularly those at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

[See the research blog report.](#) ♦



# Throw Your Birthday Party with ECHOage



## TCS Charity Challenge

In-Person Race: October 18-19, 2025  
Virtual Race: October 1-31, 2025

Silhouettes of four runners in yellow, blue, green, and orange, running from left to right against a city skyline background. A tall tower is visible in the center of the skyline.

**SAVE THE DATE**

THIS RECIPE IS SURE TO IMPRESS

## BRAISED RICE with SHRIMP and TOMATOES

This delicious dish combines succulent shrimp, crispy bacon, and aromatic vegetables with rice and tomatoes for a hearty, flavourful meal. It's an excellent source of thiamine and niacin, and a good source of vitamin C, iron, and dietary fibre. Perfect for a family dinner or a special occasion, this recipe is sure to impress!

Enjoy the rich blend of textures and tastes, and savor the nutritional benefits with every bite. Fluff with a fork, sprinkle with bacon bits and fresh coriander or parsley, and serve hot. Bon appétit!

Serves 4.

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. large raw shrimp
- 4 slices side bacon, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh hot peppers or chilies
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 ½ cups rice
- 2 ½ cups chicken stock
- 1 28 oz can tomatoes, drained

and chopped

- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped coriander or parsley

### Directions

- Shell and devein shrimp. Cut into ½ inch pieces and set aside.
- In a large saucepan, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp, about 5 minutes. With slotted spoon, set aside bacon to drain on paper towel.
- Pour off all but about 1 tbsp of the bacon fat. Add onions, garlic, hot peppers, and bay leaf; cook for about 5 minutes or until soft,

stirring often.

- Add rice, cook, stirring it for about 2 minutes. Stir in stock, tomatoes, shrimp, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes longer or until liquid is absorbed and shrimp are pink.
- Taste and adjust seasoning. Discard bay leaf.
- Fluff with fork, and serve with sprinkled bacon bits and coriander or parsley.

Find more delicious gluten-free recipes to try on our website!

[Gluten-free Recipes - Celiac Canada](#) ♦



ISTOCK

# GLUTEN-FREE PREMIUM PIZZA

Our crusts are hand-stretched and stone-baked, creating rising air pockets.



PROUD TO SUPPORT



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