

## **The Gluten-Free Diet and Gluten-Related Disorders: Getting Started**

Gluten is the general name for storage proteins found in wheat, barley, rye, and related cereal grains such as triticale, spelt, and kamut. If you have the autoimmune inflammatory conditions: celiac disease (CD) or dermatitis herpetiformis (DH), a skin form of celiac disease, even a small amount of gluten is harmful. In CD, gluten causes a reaction by the immune system. This reaction is associated with inflammation which damages the small intestine and causes poor absorption of nutrients, including vitamins and minerals. In DH, gluten leads to an immune reaction that causes skin rashes and itching as well as damage in the small intestine.

A strict gluten-free diet (GFD) is the only effective treatment for CD and DH. The strict GFD requires a lifelong elimination of all foods containing any source of gluten including wheat, barley, rye, related cereal grains (see page 3), and regular oats not labelled “gluten free.”

A strict GFD will help your small intestine to heal and improve symptoms of CD and DH over time. These symptoms may include:

- nausea
- vomiting
- abdominal pain
- abdominal bloating
- gas or flatulence
- diarrhea
- constipation
- weight loss
- anemia (low iron levels)
- fatigue
- weakness
- muscle cramps
- bone and joint pain
- mouth ulcers
- headaches or migraines
- mood swings
- depression

For a more complete list of symptoms see Celiac Canada website: [Signs and Symptoms \(celiac.ca\)](https://celiac.ca/signs-and-symptoms)

The strict GFD may also reduce the risk of developing other conditions such as nutritional deficiencies, osteoporosis, infertility, lymphoma (a type of cancer) and other autoimmune disorders. Even if you are symptom-free, you must continue with the strict GFD as treatment of your CD or DH. The strict GFD is important to prevent complications and maintain good health.

## Getting Started on a Gluten-Free

### Diet

It is recommended that you meet with a registered dietitian with expertise in CD who can help you with the strict GFD, including managing the social and emotional aspects of the gluten-free (GF) lifestyle. A dietitian can help identify and address any nutritional concerns you have and provide practical information about CD, DH, and following the GFD. Some examples include: meal planning, label reading, information about cross-contamination/cross-contact, grocery shopping, healthy GF eating strategies, GF food preparation and substitutions, eating GF away from home, and share helpful resources.

### Reading Food Labels

Reading food labels is essential to choosing safe GF options. Always check the ingredient list and read any “contains” and “may contains” statement on product packaging to know if a product is GF and safe. Refer to Table 1 on page 3 for gluten-containing ingredients and foods to be avoided.

Celiac Canada has detailed information about food labelling including contains and may contains statements and the GFD:

<https://www.celiac.ca/food-labelling/>

**Table 1. Gluten-Containing Foods and Ingredients to Avoid.**

<b>Wheat</b>	<b>Barley</b>	<b>Rye</b>	<b>Oats**</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atta • Bulgur • Couscous • Dextrin • Dinkel (also known as farro, faro or spelt) • Durum • Einkorn • Emmer • Farina • Farro or faro (also known as dinkel or spelt) • Freekeh • Fu • Graham flour • Hydrolyzed wheat protein • Kamut • Matzoh/Matzo/ Matzah • Modified wheat starch • Seitan • Semolina • Spelt (also known as dinkel, farro or faro)</li> <li>• Triticale</li> <li>• Wheat bran</li> <li>• Wheat flour</li> <li>• Wheat germ</li> <li>• Wheat gluten</li> <li>• Wheat starch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beer (ale, lager, porter, stout)</li> <li>• Barley (flakes, flour, pearls)</li> <li>• Brewer’s yeast</li> <li>• Malt*</li> <li>• Malted barley</li> <li>• Malted barley flour</li> <li>• Malted milk</li> <li>• Malt extract/malt syrup</li> <li>• Malt flavoring</li> <li>• Malt vinegar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rye flour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oat bran • Oat flour • Oatmeal • Oats</li> </ul>

\* Malt derived from barley must be avoided. However, corn malt and rice malt are gluten free.

\*\* Specially processed oats with a gluten-free claim are allowed. For more information about oats see page 4.

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## Examples of Some Items that May Contain Gluten

- Beer
- Bouillon, broth, soup, soup bases
- Burgers, meatloaf, meat substitutes
- Candies (some chocolates, chocolate bars and licorice)
- Flavoured coffees and teas
- Foods with batter (e.g. chicken fingers, fish, onion rings)
- French fries, hashbrowns, potato wedges cooked in oil used for battered foods
- Imitation bacon bits and imitation seafood
- Sausages, hot dogs, deli meats
- Sauces, marinades, gravies
- Seasonings, seasoning blends
- Snack foods (e.g. seasoned/flavoured chips, crackers, nuts)
- Soy sauce

## The Story on Oats

The protein in oats, called avenin, does not contain gluten. However, regular oats often come into contact with wheat, barley and/or rye and become “contaminated” with gluten. This can occur during seeding, harvesting, storage, transportation, milling, or processing. For these reasons regular oats must be avoided on a strict GFD.

There are specially processed “gluten-free oats” that are available. Health Canada has outlined requirements for these specially produced oats to ensure that they meet the GF regulations for treating CD or DH. Pure, uncontaminated oats (“gluten-free oats”) are safe for the majority of people with CD or DH. A small number of people with CD may not tolerate pure, uncontaminated oats. The reason for this is unknown. Talk with your doctor and dietitian before introducing GF oats into your strict GFD. For more information on oats see:

[celiac.ca/living-gluten-free/oats-statement/](https://celiac.ca/living-gluten-free/oats-statement/)

## The Gluten-Free Diet by Food Categories

The table below provides information about GF foods, drinks, and ingredients ‘allowed’, ‘to question’ and ‘to avoid’ on the GFD for CD or DH. This table is not an entire list for all foods, drinks and ingredients. This table also does not include additional information about why certain ingredients or foods are listed in each category. For more information refer to the source listed at the end of the table.

**Table 2. Gluten-Free Diet by Food Groups**

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<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Foods ALLOWED</b>	<b>Foods to QUESTION</b>	<b>Foods to AVOID</b>
<b>Dairy</b>	Milk, buttermilk, cream, sour cream, whipping cream; most ice creams, yogurts, frozen yogurts		Malted milk, packaged granola-topped yogurt, ice cream and frozen yogurt made with not-allowed ingredients (e.g., brownies, cookie dough or crumbs), ice cream cakes Specialty cheeses made with
	Cottage cheese, cream cheese (plain), hard cheeses (e.g., cheddar, mozzarella, Parmesan, Swiss), soft cheeses (e.g., brie; blue cheeses: Gorgonzola, Roquefort, Stilton), processed cheese, processed cheese foods	Dips with cream cheese or sour cream, cheese sauces, cheese spreads, seasoned/flavored shredded cheese or cheese blends	barley-based beer
<b>Non-Dairy (Plant-Based) Alternatives</b>	Most non-dairy beverages (e.g., coconut, flax, hemp, gluten-free oats, nuts, pea, potato, quinoa, rice, soy) with allowed ingredients Soy-based cheese and cream cheese, coconut or soy yogurt, ice cream made with non-dairy beverages (e.g., cashew, coconut, rice, soy)		Non-dairy beverages (e.g., coconut, flax, hemp, nuts, oats [NOT labeled “gluten-free”], potato, quinoa, rice, soy) made WITH barley malt, barley malt extract or barley malt flavoring Non-dairy oat beverages [NOT labelled “gluten-free”]* made WITHOUT barley malt, barley malt extract or barley malt flavoring * Oats used in these beverages are not gluten free.

<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Foods ALLOWED</b>	<b>Foods to QUESTION</b>	<b>Foods to AVOID</b>
<b>Grains*</b> *NOTE: Purchase grains, flours, legumes and seeds (flax, hemp) with a “gluten-free” claim.	Amaranth, buckwheat, corn, kañiwa, millet, gluten-free oats, quinoa, rice (black, brown, glutinous/sweet, green, purple, red, white), sorghum, teff, wild rice		Barley, rye, triticale, wheat (all types including durum, einkorn, emmer, farro, kamut, spelt), as well as different forms of wheat (bulgur, couscous, freekeh, wheat-based semolina) Oats (groats, steel-cut) not labelled “gluten free”
<b>Flours, Bran, Germ and Meal*</b> *NOTE: Purchase grains, flours, legumes and seeds (flax, hemp) with a “gluten-free” claim.	Amaranth flour, coconut flour, corn (bran, germ, flour), cornmeal, legume flours (bean, chickpea /garbanzo bean, Garfava™, lentil, pea, soy), mesquite flour, millet flour, nut flours (almond, cashew, chestnut, hazelnut, macadamia, peanut, pecan, walnut), gluten-free oat flour, potato flour, quinoa flour, rice flour (brown, glutinous/sweet, white), rice bran, rice polish, sorghum flour, sweet potato flour, teff flour, wild rice flour	Buckwheat flour Items made with buckwheat flour	Wheat flours (atta, graham, white, whole wheat) Wheat bran, wheat farina, wheat germ, wheat gluten Flours made from barley, einkorn, emmer, kamut, rye, spelt, triticale Oats (bran, flour, rolled oats / oatmeal) NOT labelled “gluten free”
<b>Starches</b>	Arrowroot, corn, potato, sago, tapioca (cassava / manioc), taro (dasheen/eddo)		Barley starch Wheat starch** ** Most wheat starches contain high levels of gluten protein. However, some gluten-free products may contain specially processed wheat starch.

Food Category	Foods ALLOWED	Foods to QUESTION	Foods to AVOID
<b>Grains and Grain-Based Foods*</b> *NOTE: Purchase grains, flours, legumes and seeds (flax, hemp) with a “gluten-free” claim.	<b>Hot Cereals</b> (labelled “gluten free”) Amaranth, buckwheat grits (cream of buckwheat), corn grits, cornmeal, cream of rice (brown, white), hominy grits, millet grits, gluten-free rolled oats / oatmeal and steel-cut oats, quinoa, quinoa flakes, rice flakes, soy flakes, soy grits <b>Cold Cereals</b> (labelled “gluten free”) Puffed gluten-free grains (e.g., amaranth, buckwheat, corn,		Hot cereals and infant cereals made with wheat, einkorn, emmer, farro, kamut, spelt, rye, triticale, barley and/or regular oats (rolled oats/oatmeal, steel cut) Cold cereals and infant cereals made with wheat, einkorn,
	millet, rice, sorghum), gluten-free cornflakes, gluten-free crisp rice, gluten-free granola (with or without gluten-free oats), rice flakes, soy-based cereals, other cereals with allowed ingredients <b>Pastas</b> (labelled “gluten free”) Macaroni, noodles, spaghetti and other pasta shapes made from: corn; legumes (dried beans, chickpea/garbanzo beans, lentils, peas and soybeans); millet; potato; quinoa; rice; wild rice		emmer, farro, kamut, spelt, rye, triticale, barley and/or regular oats Cereals made with added barley malt, barley malt extract or barley malt flavoring Pastas (e.g., chow mein noodles, orzo, udon) made with wheat and/or other not-allowed ingredients
	<b>Rice</b>	Buckwheat pasta	
	Plain rice (black, brown, glutinous/sweet, green, purple, red, white), wild rice	Seasoned (flavored) rice mixes, rice pilafs	

Food Category	Foods ALLOWED	Foods to QUESTION	Foods to AVOID
	<b>Miscellaneous</b> Gluten-free tortillas/wraps, gluten-free pizza dough/crust	Corn tacos, corn tortillas/wraps, polenta	Wheat flour tacos and tortillas/wraps, pizza dough and crust made with not-allowed ingredients; tabouli/tabbouleh Regular
	Gluten-free communion hosts/wafers, gluten-free matzoh/matzo/Matzah	Low-gluten communion hosts/wafers	communion hosts/wafers; matzoh/matzo/matzah made with wheat flour
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>	<b>Meat, Poultry, Fish, Seafood</b> Plain (fresh, frozen, canned) meat, poultry, fish, seafood; gluten-free breaded meat, poultry, fish, seafood	Deli/luncheon meats (e.g., bologna, ham, salami, turkey), frankfurters/wieners, sausages; meat and sandwich spreads; pâtés Burgers (meat, fish, chicken, turkey), meat loaf, ham (ready-to-cook), dried meats (e.g., beef jerky) Imitation	Meat, poultry, fish and seafood breaded in not-allowed ingredients; frozen chicken breasts injected with chicken broth (containing not- allowed ingredients); frozen turkey basted or injected with hydrolyzed wheat protein; frozen or fresh poultry with bread stuffing
		bacon bits Imitation crab or lobster (e.g., surimi), seasoned (flavored) fish in pouches	
			Canned fish in vegetable broth containing hydrolyzed wheat protein

Food Category	Foods ALLOWED	Foods to QUESTION	Foods to AVOID
	<b>Eggs</b> Plain whole eggs (fresh, frozen, liquid, powder), plain omelets, scrambled eggs Plain egg whites (frozen,	Seasoned (flavored) egg products (liquid or frozen)	Omelets and scrambled eggs made with gluten-containing ingredients
	liquid, powder) <b>Legumes*</b>	Canned beans in sauce	
	Beans (black, kidney, navy, pinto, white), chickpeas / garbanzo beans, lentils, peas, soybeans * NOTE: Purchase grains, flours, legumes and seeds (flax, hemp) with a “gluten-free” claim. <b>Nuts and Seeds</b> Plain or salted nuts and seeds (chia, poppy, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower)		
		Seeds (flax, hemp) Seasoned or dry-roasted nuts, chickpeas, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds Nut and seed butters (e.g.,	
		almond, hazelnut, peanut, sesame, sunflower)	
	<b>Meat Alternatives</b> Plain tofu	Flavored tofu, tempeh, textured soy protein (TSP) / textured vegetable protein (TVP)	Fu, seitan
		Plant-based meat substitutes (e.g., burgers, meatballs, sausages)	Plant-based meat substitutes made with wheat gluten and/or other not-allowed ingredients

<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Foods ALLOWED</b>	<b>Foods to QUESTION</b>	<b>Foods to AVOID</b>
<b>Fruits and Vegetables</b>	<b>Fruits</b> Plain fruits and juices (fresh, frozen, canned) <b>Vegetables</b> Plain vegetables and juices (fresh, frozen, canned)	Dates, fruits with sauces, fruit juices and smoothies with barley grass or wheat grass	
		French-fried potatoes, hash browns and potato wedges with seasonings or “fillers”	French-fried potatoes, hash browns and potato wedges cooked in oil also used for gluten-containing products (e.g., battered chicken and fish) Scalloped potatoes containing wheat flour, battered deep-fried vegetables
		Vegetables in sauces	
<b>Soups</b>	Gluten-free bouillon cubes, dried soup bases, prepared broths, cream soups and stocks; homemade broth, soups and stocks made from allowed ingredients	Prepared broths, soups and stocks; dried soup bases, soup mixes, bouillon cubes	Broths, soups and stocks made with not-allowed ingredients; dried soup bases, soup mixes and bouillon cubes containing hydrolyzed wheat protein, wheat starch and/or wheat flour
<b>Snack Foods</b> *NOTE: Purchase grains, flours, legumes and seeds (flax, hemp) with a “gluten-free” claim.	Plain crackers made with nuts, rice or other gluten-free grains; plain rice cakes; corn cakes; plain popcorn, potato chips, soy nuts, taco (corn) chips; gluten-free pretzels	Seasoned (flavored) crackers, rice cakes, corn cakes, potato chips, soy nuts, taco (corn) chips; wasabi peas	Potato chips made with wheat flour, barley malt flour, wheat starch and/or malt vinegar; pretzels made with wheat flour
<b>Desserts</b>	Cakes, cookies, muffins, pies and pastries made with allowed ingredients; gluten-free bread pudding; gluten-free flourless cake; gluten-free ice cream cones, wafers and waffles	Flourless cakes	Bread pudding, cakes, cookies, muffins, pies, pastries, ice cream cones, wafers and waffles made with not-allowed ingredients
	Custard, gelatin desserts, milk puddings, sherbet, sorbet	Crème brûlée	

<b>Food Category</b>	<b>Foods ALLOWED</b>	<b>Foods to QUESTION</b>	<b>Foods to AVOID</b>
<b>Sugars, Candies and Other Sweets</b>	Agave nectar/syrup, corn syrup, honey, jam, jelly, marmalade, maple syrup, molasses Brown sugar,	Honey powder	
	coconut sugar, confectioner's/icing sugar, turbinado sugar, white sugar Chocolates and chocolate bars made from allowed	Icings and frostings, sweet sauces/toppings Chocolates, chocolate	
	ingredients; gluten-free licorice, marshmallows, whipped toppings	bars, hard candies, Smarties®	Licorice and other candies made with not-allowed ingredients
<b>Beverages</b>	Cocoa, coffee (instant or ground; regular or decaffeinated), flavored waters, soft drinks, tea	Coffee substitutes, flavored coffees, flavored and herbal teas, hot chocolate mixes	Coffee substitutes made with not-allowed ingredients (e.g., Postum®), malt-based beverages (e.g., Ovaltine® [chocolate malt and malt flavors])
<b>Alcoholic Beverages</b>	Distilled alcohols (e.g., bourbon, brandy, gin, liqueurs, rum, rye whiskey, scotch whiskey, vodka); gluten-free beer, wine	Specialty premixed alcoholic beverages (e.g., Caesar vodka beverage, hard ciders, coolers), sake (rice wine)	Beers derived from barley, wheat and/or rye Gluten-reduced beers derived from barley, wheat and/or rye
<b>Fats</b>	Butter, margarine, lard, shortening, vegetable oils, mayonnaise, salad dressings with allowed ingredients	Baking/cooking spray, salad dressings, suet	Salad dressings made with not-allowed ingredients

Food Category	Foods ALLOWED	Foods to QUESTION	Foods to AVOID
<b>Condiments / Sauces / Dips</b>	Herbs, pepper, salt, spices	Seasonings, seasoning blends/mixes Curry paste	
	Ketchup, mustard (plain prepared), mustard flour (pure), olives, pickles (in clear brine), relish, tomato paste, vinegars (apple cider, balsamic, distilled white/spirit, pure rice, red wine, white wine)	Mustards (specialty prepared), mustard flour (prepared), mustard pickles, rice vinegar Barbecue sauces, cooking sauces,	Malt vinegar, miso (made with barley and/or wheat)
	Gluten-free barbecue sauce, gluten-free miso, gluten-free soy sauce, gluten-free tamari soy sauce, gluten-free teriyaki sauce, other sauces and gravies made with allowed ingredients	Worcestershire sauce	Soy sauce, tamari soy sauce or shoyu soy sauce (made with wheat); teriyaki sauce (made with soy sauce containing wheat); other sauces and gravies made with hydrolyzed wheat protein, wheat flour and/or wheat starch
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Baking chocolate (pure), carob chips and powder, chocolate chips, cocoa (plain), coconut		
	Baking soda, cream of tartar, monosodium glutamate (MSG), vanilla (pure), vanilla extract (artificial/imitation), vanilla extract (pure), natural vanilla flavor	Baking powder, koji Barley grass and wheat grass	Tempura (breaded with wheat flour)
	Guar gum, xanthan gum, psyllium husks		
	Yeast (active dry, baker's, nutritional, torula)	Autolyzed yeast, autolyzed yeast extract / yeast extract	Brewer's yeast

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## Additional Resources

### Celiac Canada

1-800-363-7296

[info@celiac.ca](mailto:info@celiac.ca)

### Celiac Canada Pocket Dictionary of Ingredients

[www.celiac.ca/living-gluten-free/newly-diagnosed/](http://www.celiac.ca/living-gluten-free/newly-diagnosed/)

### Shelley Case, RD

[shelleycase.com](http://shelleycase.com)

### Tricia Thompson, RD

[glutenfreewatchdog.org](http://glutenfreewatchdog.org)



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