

FIRST LINE GLUTEN FREE DIETARY ADVICE FOR PATIENTS WITH COELIAC DISEASE OR DERMATITIS HERPETIFORMIS

Introduction

If you have been diagnosed with Coeliac Disease or Dermatitis Herpetiformis, the lifelong treatment is a gluten free diet. Gluten is a type of protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Oats contain a protein similar to gluten which some people also need to avoid. It is important to see a Registered Dietitian to help you understand a gluten free diet, as well for advice on treating and preventing any related nutritional deficiencies.

Food

On a Gluten Free diet you can eat naturally containing gluten free foods this includes – meat, fish, eggs, pulses, fruits and vegetables, potatoes, milk.

There are also lots of foods which need to be checked for their gluten content as it can vary from one manufacturer to another, due to the ingredients used and the manufacturing processes. These foods include - breakfast cereals, processed meats and fish e.g. sausages, fish fingers, processed potatoes products.

Gluten containing foods include but are not limited to the following - pasta and pizza, wheat noodles, bread, cakes and biscuits including crackers and most breakfast cereals.

There are also gluten free substitute foods available for these products. These are available in the **free from** section of the supermarket and health food stores. For people with a confirmed diagnosis of Coeliac Disease or Dermatitis Herpetiformis you may be entitled to some gluten free bread and flour mix products on prescription. As the products vary a lot in taste it is important to try a variety before deciding what you may use on a regular basis.

As you start to follow a Gluten Free Diet your gut will start to heal, and you will start to feel better. For some people this occurs within a few days of cutting out gluten, but some people may see more of a gradual improvement in their symptoms or that one symptom improves before another.

Checking Labels

Foods which are labelled as “gluten free”, “suitable for Coeliacs”, and “no gluten-containing ingredients” can be eaten. Legally, manufacturers must highlight in the ingredients list if there is gluten or a gluten containing ingredient in the product.



Crossed Grain Symbol

Coeliac UK have developed the Crossed Grain Trademark symbol which is displayed on food labels that are certified as truly gluten free after undergoing a strict certification process (Crossed Grain Trademark certification scheme) including gluten analysis and independent audits of manufacturing processes.

Oats

Gluten free oats may not be tolerated by everyone with Coeliac Disease. Your Dietitian will discuss this with you at your appointment.

Contamination of foods with gluten

If you are following a gluten free diet, it's important to not undo all your good work by allowing your gluten free food to be contaminated with food that contains gluten.

Even tiny amounts of gluten may cause people with Coeliac Disease to have symptoms in the short term, and gut damage long term.

Steps to avoid cross contamination include –

- Consider using separate bread boards
- Use toaster bags or a separate toaster
- Use different butter knives or dishes and jam spoons to prevent breadcrumbs from getting into condiments

Eating out

Today, many eating establishments will have gluten free options on their menus and have kitchen and food handling procedures in place to cater for people who need a strict gluten free diet. So there's no reason why you can't eat out if you have Coeliac Disease, but you can make the experience easier and safer by knowing what to look for.

The GF symbol



Coeliac UK has a unique symbol that can help you quickly identify venues which follow strict procedures in food handling and ingredient use to ensure a safe gluten free experience. The GF symbol on a menu tells you that the dish is gluten free according to the law and that the caterer meets all requirements of the Gluten Free standard.

Useful information and links for support

Coeliac UK is a national charity which supports people with Coeliac Disease.

Visit www.coeliac.org.uk or telephone the helpline: 0333 332 2033

The following is a link to a patient webinar which will provide further information

<https://patientwebinars.co.uk/condition/coeliac-disease/>

Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coeliac-disease/> for more information