



Catering for those with coeliac disease...

What is coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease is a genetic medical condition that results in permanent intestinal intolerance to dietary gluten. The only treatment for coeliac disease is a strict, lifelong gluten free diet. If left untreated, the lining of the small bowel is damaged. For those diagnosed with coeliac disease, a gluten free diet is not a choice, but a necessity, as even the smallest amount of gluten can cause illness and/or bowel damage.

What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats and ingredients derived from these grains. When following a gluten free diet, all gluten must be avoided. Obvious forms of gluten include most bread, breakfast cereals, cakes, biscuits, pastry, pizza, pasta, batter and breadcrumbs unless made from gluten free grains. Beer also contains gluten. There are a number of gluten free products available to substitute for their gluten containing counterparts. The following information will assist those responsible for catering for someone with coeliac disease...

How do I identify gluten free products?

There are 3 broad groups of food that are suitable for those on a gluten free diet:

1. Naturally gluten free foods

There are a wide variety of fresh foods that are naturally gluten free. These include:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Fresh meat, poultry and fish
- Eggs, nuts and legumes
- Milk (some flavoured milk may contain gluten)
- Fats & oils
- Grains including: rice, corn (maize), soy, sago, tapioca, buckwheat, millet, amaranth, sorghum, quinoa and arrowroot

2. Food labelled 'gluten free'

A number of products are labelled gluten free. If a food is labelled gluten free, it must contain 'no detectable gluten' according to the Australian Food Standard.

The gluten free label overrides the ingredient listing.

For example, if a product is labelled gluten free but Maltodextrin (wheat) is listed as an ingredient, the product is gluten free and suitable for inclusion in a gluten free diet.

3. Products that are gluten free by ingredient

If a product is not labelled as gluten free, it is important to check the ingredient listing. Some products, although not made specifically for the gluten free market, simply happen to be gluten free by ingredient.

Under mandatory labelling standards, all ingredients and food additives derived from wheat, rye, barley and oats must be declared on food labels. This means that ingredients where the source grain is not identified are therefore from a non-gluten containing grain and are gluten free.

Ultimately, if you don't see wheat, rye, barley, oats or gluten on a food label, there are no ingredients derived from gluten containing grains.

Exceptions... The following ingredients are so highly processed, that they are gluten free even though a gluten source is indicated:

- Glucose syrup from wheat/wheat glucose syrup
- Caramel colour from wheat
- Dextrose from wheat

Additional Tips

- Products that use advisory statements such as:
 - 'May contain gluten'
 - 'Manufactured on the same line as gluten containing products'are not suitable for those on a gluten free diet
- The use of an 'either/or' statement within the ingredient list eg starch (wheat or maize) also excludes a product from a gluten free diet unless it is labelled gluten free.

Avoid contamination...

- Thoroughly clean bread boards, knives and other cooking utensils used in food preparation.
- Ensure appliances such as toasters, sandwich makers and grills are clean before preparing gluten free foods.
- Separate butter and condiment pots should be used to prevent crumb contamination.
- Use separate water in a clean pot for cooking or re-heating gluten free pasta.
- Do not dust meats or fish with flour prior to cooking.
- Do not dust cake tins with gluten containing flour (including wheaten cornflour).
- Store gluten free products and ingredients in separate sealed containers, and clearly label all foods in the pantry, refrigerator and freezer once they have been removed from original packaging.
- Icing sugar mixture commonly contains wheat. Keep this in mind when dusting cakes and slices. There is now a gluten free icing sugar mixture available.
- Clean deep frying oil regularly to remove visible batter or crumbs. This will ensure gluten free fried food is not contaminated.

If you are unsure whether a product is suitable, please double check with your customer. You are also welcome to phone The Coeliac Society in your state for clarification of any of the above information.

Each state society offers professional associate membership for individuals and companies working in food service provision. The Coeliac Society's Ingredient List Booklet is included with membership. For further information, please contact your state coeliac society www.coeliacsociety.com.au