

Coeliac disease

and diabetes

Coeliac disease is a condition where the lining of the small intestine is damaged due to sensitivity to a protein in food called gluten. Coeliac disease and diabetes may occur together and is most common in people with type 1 diabetes. It is estimated that up to 10% of people with type 1 diabetes may have coeliac disease.

This information sheet provides tips about managing diabetes and coeliac disease and should be read in conjunction with Diabetes Australia's information sheet *Food Choices for People with Diabetes*.

What are the symptoms of coeliac disease?

The following symptoms often indicate the presence of coeliac disease:

- Diarrhoea, steatorrhoea (floating, fatty stools)
- Loss of weight
- Abdominal bloating or distention
- Flatulence

A gluten-free diet is currently the only known treatment for coeliac disease. Gluten-free foods include corn, rice, sago, tapioca, buckwheat, potato, soy, arrowroot, fresh fruit, vegetables, meat (except most processed meats), poultry, fish and most dairy foods.

Which foods have gluten and therefore need to be avoided?

Foods containing gluten include wheat, rye, oats, barley and triticale. Other foods that may contain gluten include processed foods with ingredients such as wheaten cornflour, wheat starch, malt, malt extract, maltodextrin and the thickeners 1400 to 1450. Gluten containing foods must be permanently avoided along with products made from these foods. This includes many breads, cereals, biscuits, cakes, scones, pizzas, pies and processed foods. The Coeliac Society of Australia produces an Ingredient List booklet that lists ingredients and their suitability for a gluten-free diet. All people with coeliac disease should obtain a copy of this booklet to guide their food choices. See the back page for contact details.

Why is it important not to eat gluten?

If coeliac disease is left untreated, your chance of developing other medical problems increases. Even if you are eating gluten and not experiencing symptoms, damage to your intestine can still occur. Untreated or inadequately treated coeliac disease can lead to your body not being able to properly absorb essential nutrients from food such as iron and calcium. It can also lead to difficulty in controlling your diabetes.

Healthy eating for diabetes and coeliac disease

For those who have diabetes and coeliac disease, healthy eating includes:

- Regular meals and snacks containing gluten-free carbohydrates
- Foods that are low in saturated fat
- Plenty of fruit and vegetables

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes and coeliac disease, it is recommended that you see a dietitian with expertise in coeliac disease for specific advice and guidance about developing an eating plan that's right for you.

Why are carbohydrate foods important?

Carbohydrate foods are the best energy source for your body. When digested, they break down to form glucose in the bloodstream. Eating regular meals and spreading carbohydrate foods evenly throughout the day, may help maintain energy levels without causing large rises in your blood glucose levels. If you take insulin or certain diabetes tablets, you may need to eat between-meal carbohydrate snacks. Discuss this with your dietitian or diabetes educator.

Which carbohydrate foods are gluten-free?

All the foods listed below are gluten-free (GF) carbohydrates. Those in *italics* have a lower glycaemic index (or GI) which means they have a slower effect on blood glucose levels.

Gluten-free carbohydrates	
Gluten-free bread	made from rice, corn, potato, soy, GF pizza bases, <i>GF corn tortillas</i> , GF pancakes and GF muffins.
Gluten-free breakfast cereals	rice flakes, GF cornflakes, GF muesli, <i>rice bran</i> , puffed rice and corn, rice porridge.
Rice	<i>Basmati</i> , <i>Doongara</i> TM , white rice, arborio rice, brown rice, jasmine rice.
Legumes	<i>kidney beans</i> , <i>chick peas</i> , <i>lentils</i> , <i>three bean mix</i> , <i>butter beans</i> , <i>GF baked beans</i> (always check the ingredient list on the label for gluten containing thickeners).
Fruit	all types such as <i>apples</i> , <i>oranges</i> , <i>peaches</i> , bananas and melons. As fruit is a good source of fibre, try to eat the whole fruit rather than drinking juice.
Gluten free crispbread	corn thins, rice cakes, corn cakes, GF crackers.
Dairy products	<i>milk</i> , <i>GF soy drink</i> , <i>GF custard</i> , <i>GF yoghurt</i> and <i>GF ice cream</i> (always check the ingredient list on the label for gluten containing thickeners).
Vegetables containing carbohydrate	potatoes, <i>sweet potato</i> , <i>yams</i> , <i>sweet corn</i> .
Gluten free pasta	corn pasta, rice pasta, <i>rice vermicelli</i> , rice noodles.

What about salads and green vegetables?

Vegetables such as salad vegetables and green vegetables are low in carbohydrate and therefore have little effect on your blood glucose levels. Try to include at least 5 serves of vegetables containing carbohydrate each day.

Further information

Phone the Coeliac Society of Australia in your State:

NSW & ACT:	02 9411 4100	QLD:	07 3854 0123
SA & NT:	08 8365 1488	TAS:	03 6427 2844
VIC:	03 9808 5566	WA:	08 9444 9200

Coeliac Society of Australia website: www.coeliac.org.au

More information on gluten free diets is available in:

- *Living with Diabetes and Coeliac Disease* – available from The Coeliac Society of Australia, Diabetes Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia
- *Ingredient List* – available from The Coeliac Society of Australia Inc.

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For more information phone 1300 136 588

Website: www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

Multilingual information: www.multilingualdiabetes.org.au

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