

What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease is an autoimmune condition where consuming gluten (found in wheat, barley, and rye) triggers an immune response that damages the small intestine. This can prevent proper nutrient absorption, leading to digestive issues, fatigue, and nutrient deficiencies.

The only treatment for celiac disease is a strict gluten-free diet, as even small amounts of gluten can cause serious intestinal damage.

Not diagnosed yet? Visit celiac.org for diagnosis resources:

<https://celiac.org/about-celiac-disease/what-is-celiac-disease/>

Things to Know About Celiac Disease:

1. Gluten Can Hide in Many Products

Gluten hides in unexpected places such as sauces, processed foods, medications, and even beauty products. Always check labels carefully, and consult your healthcare provider for gluten-free medication alternatives.

2. Cross-Contamination Is a Real Risk

Even the smallest bit of gluten exposure through cross-contamination can trigger a flare-up. Replace and/or designate separate utensils, cutting boards and toasters. Store gluten-free food separately to avoid cross-contamination, especially if not maintaining a gluten-free household.

3. Dining Out Requires Extra Care & Research

Many restaurants now offer gluten-free options, but cross-contamination still remains a big risk. Always ask if food is prepared in a dedicated allergy section of the restaurant and if it's celiac safe, not just gluten-friendly -- if not, cross contamination will likely be present and you should not eat at that restaurant. Gluten-free restaurant apps are available and may offer some guidance, however continue to ask questions as mentioned above when at the restaurant (or even better – consider calling ahead).

4. Gluten Exposure Symptoms Vary

When you accidentally consume gluten, you may be asymptomatic, or experience digestive issues like bloating and diarrhea. However, intestinal damage can occur even if symptoms seem mild or absent. Blood sugar may be impacted in those with type 1 diabetes, so monitor and check blood sugars.

5. It's Important to Read Food Labels

Many products are labeled "Gluten-Free" or Certified Gluten Free in grocery stores. Avoid products whose ingredients include wheat, rye, barley, malt, or triticale, which are common sources of gluten.

6. Celiac Diet and Gluten-Free Diet are NOT the Same

Many people and some restaurants don't know the difference between celiac disease and a gluten-free lifestyle. Gluten-free individuals—those who avoid gluten for health or dietary reasons—may tolerate some level of cross-contamination, but those with celiac disease cannot. It's essential to self-advocate and clarify these differences as someone with Celiac because misunderstandings can lead to serious health risks.

Additional Resources:

Navigating the Kitchen

Many kitchen items can trap gluten in hard-to-clean crevices, pores, or scratches after use, making it difficult to remove all traces. To prevent cross-contamination, it's important to replace or designate gluten-free versions of the following:

- Toaster/Toaster oven or toaster bags. Air Fryer.
- Cutting Boards, pizza stone & wooden rolling pins
- Any Wooden Utensils, silicone/plastic cooking items
- Plastic food storage
- Nonstick Pans & waffle irons
- Baking Supplies, Strainers and any item with holes like sifters or colanders. Sponges too!

Consider any other items that may also need to be replaced or have designated substitutes for. And if the whole house can't be gluten-free, it's critical to keep gluten-free and non-gluten-free items completely separate. Remember to clean and scrub pantry shelves, counters and cabinets that store dishes.

Travel Situations

When traveling, be aware that gluten-free and T1D awareness can vary significantly from country to country. In some places, gluten-free options may be limited, and cross-contamination risks may be higher. Research your destination ahead of time, including local cuisine, potential gluten-free restaurants, and grocery stores. Learn key phrases in the local language to explain your dietary restrictions. Always carry gluten-free snacks and glucose for emergencies. Consider translation cards:

<https://www.celiactravel.com/cards/>

Social Situations or Family

Navigating social events and family gatherings can be challenging for those with celiac disease and T1D. Communicate your dietary needs clearly to hosts in advance and offer to bring a gluten-free and/or lower-carb dish to share (and therefore avoid cross-contamination). Even close family members may not fully understand your condition, so it's important to be explicit about your condition while also encouraging them to learn about your dietary restrictions to foster understanding and support. When dining out, check menus beforehand or suggest restaurants with gluten-free options. Gluten-free Applications like Find Me Gluten Free & Gluten Dude may be helpful in finding gluten-free restaurants, but it's important to be cautious, as the accuracy of reviews and recommendations depends on user input.

Ask your healthcare provider for a letter of support to provide to your child's school to get started with obtaining a 504 plan. Most schools, under federally regulated Section 504, are required to provide accommodations to those with T1D or Celiac.



Managing Celiac Disease Alongside Type 1 Diabetes: What to Know, Say and Do



Things to Know About Managing Celiac Disease with Type 1 Diabetes:

Being diagnosed with celiac disease, on top of managing type 1 diabetes (T1D), can seem overwhelming at first--6% of the T1D community also have been diagnosed with Celiac. For those who already manage T1D, this diagnosis means not only adjusting your diet to eliminate gluten but also understanding how these two conditions interact to affect blood sugar control.

1. Gluten-Free Foods Often Contain More Carbs

Many gluten-free products, especially processed ones, contain more sugar and carbohydrates to make up for texture and flavor differences. So, you may need to adjust your insulin doses according to the updated carb counts for gluten-free products.

2. Prepare Gluten-Free Snacks for Lows

It's essential to have gluten-free snacks ready for treating hypoglycemia, or "lows". Traditional options like crackers or granola bars likely contain gluten, so you'll need gluten-free alternatives. Examples are: Juicy Juice (15 carbs), 8oz glass of whole milk (12 carbs), 3 Starbursts (12 carbs), 2 rolls of Smarties (12 carbs), GoGo SqueeZ Appleapple (15 carbs).

3. You'll Be Reading More Labels

With both celiac disease and T1D, label reading becomes even more crucial. You'll need to monitor products for both gluten and carb counts. Take your time to familiarize yourself with new brands and foods that fit your needs. Even medicines may contain gluten.

4. Untreated Celiac Can Increase Risk of Lows

Untreated celiac disease can cause long-term damage to the small intestine. This may hinder the body's ability to absorb nutrients, including carbs, leading to frequent or unpredictable lows. Properly treating Celiac with a gluten-free diet helps ensure proper nutrient absorption, helping blood sugar management.

5. Managing Low Blood Sugar After Gluten Exposure

If you accidentally consume gluten, the resulting digestive issues may make it harder to absorb nutrients, **potentially causing low blood sugar within hours of ingestion** because your body may absorb glucose at a slower rate. Monitor your blood sugar very closely during these times and be prepared to treat any lows.



What Happens if I Accidentally Consume Gluten?

1. Rest and Take It Easy

If you accidentally consume gluten, your body will need time to recover. Resting and avoiding stress is crucial. Focus on allowing your body and mind time to heal.

2. Soothe your symptoms

If you experience any symptoms after gluten exposure, you may consider taking over-the-counter medications to soothe your symptoms and make you feel more comfortable. Consult your health care provider about specific medications to ensure appropriate and gluten-free.

3. Stay Hydrated

Drink plenty of water, especially if you experience diarrhea or vomiting after gluten exposure as staying hydrated will help flush your system. If diarrhea is severe, consider an electrolyte drink low in sugar to prevent dehydration (ex. Pedialyte and Liquid IV are electrolyte drinks with sugar-free versions).

4. Remember to Monitor Your Blood Sugar

If you experience diarrhea or vomiting, it can lead to severe dehydration, which may result in abnormally high blood sugar levels. If your blood sugar remains high for an extended period of time, call your doctor for advice.

5. Consult Your Healthcare Team

If gluten exposure leads to significant discomfort, reach out to your registered dietitian or healthcare provider. They may recommend other options to support your recovery.



To learn more about managing Celiac Disease alongside Type 1 Diabetes, visit www.elbowbumpkidinc.org.

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Grocery Shopping Tips:

When shopping for gluten-free products it's important to know which foods are naturally safe and which commonly contain gluten. Consider both gluten-free for Celiac and carb counts for T1D. It's smart to make a list of your favorite gluten-free alternatives (and if you can't find a GF alternatives, reach out to us!). There are many options listed in our longer guide. Finally, phone applications like Fig: Food Scanner can help you identify gluten-free foods at the grocery store. Gluten-free Applications may be helpful in finding gluten-free items at the grocery store, but **always read food labels**.

Common Gluten-Free Foods:

- **Fresh Fruits & Vegetables:** Naturally gluten-free and a safe choice for snacks and meals.
- **Meat, Poultry, & Fish:** Plain, unseasoned meat is gluten-free, but be cautious of marinades and processed meats.
- **Rice, Quinoa, & Gluten-Free Grains:** Naturally gluten-free grains like rice, quinoa, and buckwheat are great staples.
- **Dairy Products:** Most plain dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt are gluten-free, but check labels for added ingredients.
- **Legumes & Nuts:** Beans, lentils, and nuts are safe, though some flavored or canned varieties may contain gluten additives.

Common Non Gluten-Free Foods:

- **Processed Foods:** Many processed foods, like soups, sauces, and salad dressings, can contain hidden gluten in the form of thickeners or flavorings.
- **Bread & Baked Goods:** Unless labeled gluten-free, most breads, pastries, and baked goods contain gluten from wheat flour.
- **Pasta:** Traditional pasta is made from wheat, so opt for gluten-free versions made from rice, corn, lentils, or chickpeas.
- **Snacks:** Crackers, chips, and pretzels often contain gluten unless specifically labeled otherwise. GF and Non-GF version can look almost identical... Always read the label!
- **Sauces & Condiments:** Soy sauce, gravies, and some salad dressings can contain gluten. Look for gluten-free versions or make your own.

A registered dietitian can provide personalized meal planning and help you navigate dietary challenges of having both Celiac and T1D. Be careful with open bins and bakery sections due to the higher potential for cross-contamination.



Look for certified GF symbols on packages, like this one!

