**GLUTEN**

WHAT IS GLUTEN AND WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Gluten is a protein found in grains, particularly in wheat, rye, and barley. Some oats may contain gluten due to contamination during processing. The following table lists some of the other flours, cereals, and starches that contain gluten:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| White flour | Einkorn | Emmer |
| Spelt | **Kamut** | **Wheat starch, bran, germ** |
| Bulgur | **Matzo meal** | **Cracked wheat** |
| Hydrolyzed wheat protein | **Semolina** | **Self-rising flour** |
| Triticale | **Durum flour** | **Enriched flour** |
| Farina | **Graham flour** | **Phosphated flour** |

WHY GO GLUTEN-FREE?

Gluten-free diets are very specific and are recommended for people with celiac disease, also known as non-tropical sprue or gluten-sensitive enteropathy. When a person with celiac disease ingests gluten, it causes inflammation and damage to the lining of the small intestine. This can cause diarrhea, upset stomach, abdominal pain, fatigue, joint pain, and bloating.

Following a strict gluten-free diet can help control the signs and symptoms of celiac disease and is the only treatment possible. It can take anywhere from a few months (in children) to a few years (in adults) to heal the small intestine.

WHAT CAN I EAT?

While there are many strict guidelines to following a gluten-free diet, it is crucial to stay positive and focus on the many options of foods you can eat. Many restaurants are now offering gluten-free options. Also, many companies have created gluten-free products in the groceries stores. Bob’s Red Mill, Betty Crocker, Amy’s, and General Mills are just a few examples that offer these products.

The following table lists some of the flours, grains, and starches that are allowed on a gluten-free diet.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Amaranth | Rice Bran | Polenta |
| Arrowroot | **Sago** | **Hominy grits** |
| Buckwheat | **Sorghum** | **Quinoa** |
| Corn/Corn meal | **Soy** | **Rice Polish** |
| Flax | **Sweet Potato Flour** | **Potato Starch/Flour** |
| Legume flours | **Nut flours** | **Wild Rice** |
| Millet | **Tapioca** | **Tef** |

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE CELIAC DISEASE?

If you feel you are experiencing symptoms of celiac disease, it is important to get tested. Your physician can order a blood test checking for high levels of the antibodies tTGA (anti-tissue transglutaminase antibodies) or EMA (anti-endomysium antibodies) as well as a genetic test. If blood tests suggest that you have celiac disease then a biopsy of the small intestine will be taken to confirm that there has been damage. It is important to be consuming a diet containing gluten *before* having blood work completed or else the test can show up falsely negative.

If you do not have celiac disease but you have symptoms of the disease, you may be gluten-sensitive. Your body may be reacting to processed foods, some of which contain gluten. The following table contains a list of some more common processed foods that may contain gluten.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bouillon cubes | French Fries | Brown rice syrup |
| Gravy | **Season tortilla chips** | **Self-basting turkey** |
| Candy | **Imitation fish** | **Soups** |
| Chips | **Matzo** | **Soy Sauce** |
| Communion wafers | **Rice mixes** | **Cold cuts** |
| Hot dogs | **Salami** | **Sausage** |

Whether you have celiac disease or you are gluten-sensitive, it is important to meet with a Registered Dietitian to ensure that you are on the correct diet for your specific condition.

References

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