

# Gluten-Free Guide

## What is Gluten?

Gluten is a type of protein found in certain grains & grain products. Gluten acts as a “glue” and helps certain foods hold their structure.

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## Where is Gluten Found?

Gluten is found in many different foods, including grains such as **wheat**, **barley**, **rye**, & **spelt**. Most grain-based products like cereals, breads, crackers, and pasta contain gluten, unless otherwise specified.

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## What Foods are Gluten-Free?

Many foods are gluten-free in their natural state, like vegetables and **fruits**, **meat and poultry**, **beans**, **seeds and nuts**, and **dairy products**.



Without gluten-containing additives, these foods are safe for anyone on a gluten-free diet.



Oats are naturally gluten-free, but are usually processed very close to other gluten-containing grains like wheat and rye which puts them at risk for cross-contamination. If this is a concern, look for oats that are certified gluten-free.

## Following a Gluten Free Diet

Anyone can follow a gluten-free diet, but this diet is required, and is the only treatment available, for celiac disease. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease in which the body has an immune reaction to gluten causing damage to the villi in the small intestine.

Individuals who have Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity (NCGS) may also be advised by a their health care team to follow a gluten-free diet to improve digestion and symptoms.

## Wheat Allergy

Celiac disease is **not** the same as a wheat allergy. A wheat allergy is a reaction to wheat protein. Allergic reactions can range from mild to severe.



See [Food Allergy Canada](#) for more information on Celiac Disease vs. Wheat Allergies, and [UnlockFood.ca](#) for more information on Wheat Allergy.

## Cross Contamination

Some foods that do not naturally contain gluten or wheat can become contaminated with gluten during the **manufacturing process**. Cross-contamination can also happen during **food preparation** at home or in a restaurant. If gluten-containing products are not safely stored and prepared away from gluten-free products, small amounts of gluten can be spread from one product to another.