

## **Twenty Tips for Living GlutenFree**

1. Find out whether you really have celiac disease before following a gluten-free diet. Sometimes you have symptoms, read about celiac disease and try the diet, convinced you have the disease. This is a huge mistake. The blood test and intestinal biopsy used to diagnose celiac disease (also known as gluten sensitive enteropathy) rely on the presence of gluten in the diet. You can get a false-negative result, even if you really do have celiac disease, after having eaten a gluten-free diet. The longer you've eaten gluten-free, the higher the risk of a false negative. The return to a gluten-containing diet in order to be properly tested can bring on a backlash of uncomfortable symptoms. The intestinal biopsy is the gold standard for diagnosing gluten sensitive enteropathy, but many specialists recommend starting with a blood test. The best available tests are the immunoglobulin A antihuman tissue transglutaminase and immunoglobulin A endomysial antibody immunofluorescence. These tests have equivalent diagnostic accuracy. The antigliadin antibody tests are no longer routinely recommended because of their lower sensitivity and specificity. If you test positive for gluten sensitive enteropathy, strictly following the diet is important, not only for the management of symptoms but also to prevent long-term complications such as osteoporosis, infertility, anemia and cancer of the GI tract.
2. Be a Savvy Shopper. (Shop the perimeters.) Many people believe that they have to buy lots of expensive gluten-free products to follow a gluten-free diet. There are many foods that are naturally gluten-free, and these are found in the perimeters of the supermarket: the produce aisle, the dairy department, and the meat, poultry and seafood counters. You just need to eliminate the bakery department and head to the gluten-free bread and baked goods aisle.
3. Ask for a gluten-free product list. Some supermarkets, such as Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and Wegmans, publish lists of all the gluten-free foods they sell. Go to the supermarket's customer service desk and ask for one of those lists. Or you can download the list from the supermarket's website.
4. Avoid Bulk Bins. Natural foods supermarkets carry a number of gluten-free products. But they also offer grains as well as other foods in bulk bins, which can pose a hazard. Never buy your grains from bulk bins because of the chance of cross-contamination. You never know when someone before you used the rice scoop in the wheat bran.
5. Wheat free isn't the same as gluten-free. Some products may be labeled as wheat free, but they may contain barley or rye---grains known to contain gluten. It is important to know all the gluten-containing ingredients, as some can seem almost like hidden ingredients. For example, barley malt is used as a coffee flavoring, and it contains gluten. Make a list of gluten-containing ingredients and use it as a tool to learn the ingredients that contain gluten.
6. Look for gluten-free labeling. The FDA is expected to issue a final rule that will spell out what gluten-free means when manufacturers voluntarily use

this lingo on product labels. Once this rule becomes final, a product labeled 'gluten-free' will have to contain fewer than 20 parts per million gluten. This will apply to oats; gluten-free foods made using wheat starch and wheat starch hydrolysates such as wheat-based maltodextrin, wheat-based dextrin, and wheat-based glucose syrup; and foods made using naturally gluten-free ingredients that may contain gluten through cross-contamination. Labels for foods such as milk, for example, that don't contain gluten will be able to state that the products are naturally gluten-free.

7. Use a blend of gluten-free flours. When you bake gluten-free, you need to use a blend of flours. Some brands include Bob's Red Mill, Glutino Foods, and Pamela's Products. Use brands such as these as replacements for wheat flour. One staple flour blend is a combination of 1.5 cups of sorghum flour, 1.5 cups of potato starch and 1 cup of tapioca flour.
8. A good batter is a loose batter. If your bread dough looks more like batter, you're on the right track. Gluten-free flour is thirsty. The tendency is to want to add more flour, but don't. This will make the product too dry once it's baked.
9. Add eggs for volume. Gluten is the protein in wheat flour that lends structure to baked goods. To prevent gluten-free baked goods from being flat or misshapen, try this: Replace one third or one half of the liquid called for in the recipe with an equal amount of egg or egg whites.
10. Get a food processor. A food processor distributes the liquid in the dry ingredients better than does a handheld mixer, and this will improve the quality of a gluten-free bread or baked good.
11. Shape the batter. Once in the baking pan, gluten-free batters must be shaped. Moisten a spatula with either water or oil and make the top of the bread as smooth as possible. What you start with in the pan is what you get when it comes out of the oven.
12. Go for high fiber gluten-free grains. Don't limit the diet to rice and corn. Amaranth is a small grain that adds thickness to soups, stews and chilies. Buckwheat is ideal for making pancakes. Quinoa is a cereal-like grain that's as easy to use as rice. Teff has a nice, nutty flavor and easily makes a hot breakfast cereal. Millet flour can be used in savory corn bread recipes. Just substitute  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the cornmeal with millet flour. A little wild rice added to white rice adds a chewy texture and color.
13. Try flaxseeds. Flaxseeds are another way to add fiber and nutrients to gluten-free dishes. Grind seeds so they don't pass through the digestive tract unabsorbed. Refrigerate seeds once they're ground.
14. Go for the oats. Oats a good source of soluble fiber (lowers cholesterol) and insoluble fiber (aids the digestive process). Oats uncontaminated by other grains are safe to eat on a gluten-free diet.
15. Use rice flour for frying and thickening. Rice flour's course quality is a boon to frying. Dredging foods in rice flour before frying gives a terrific crunchy texture to the menu item. Sweet rice flour is an ideal thickener for soups and gravies.

16. Try flour-free thickening. Use an immersion blender to puree a portion or all of the ingredients until you reach a desired texture.
17. Make instant bread crumbs. Put gluten-free bread into the food processor for 20-30 seconds for instant bread crumbs. They can be stored in a plastic bag in the freezer for use anytime.
18. Keep gluten-free bread fresh and refreshed. Freeze gluten-free bread immediately because it doesn't contain preservatives and will go moldy at room temperature faster than wheat-based breads. Reheat frozen gluten-free bread in the microwave at the lowest setting for 20-30 seconds and eat right away.
19. Prevent cross-contamination. Buy condiments such as mustard, mayonnaise and jelly in squeeze bottles. Then there is no chance of double dipping or having regular bread crumbs contaminate the condiments when a family member dips into the jar with a knife.
20. Order gluten-free. Ask if your restaurant offers a gluten-free menu. If not, ask what menu items are gluten-free.

Source: Carol M. Bareuther, RD