

## Gluten free diet

Gluten is a protein component of the grains wheat, rye, barley, triticale and oats. For a person who is sensitive to gluten, even tiny amounts can cause harm in the small intestine. When the lining of the small intestine is damaged, nutrients are poorly absorbed. Untreated, this can result in a range of disorders including malnutrition, osteoporosis, infertility, learning and behaviour problems.

It is thought there are both genetic and environmental factors involved. There is no cure, but the effects can be managed by:

- Completing a desensitization programme and
- lifelong adherence to a gluten controlled diet.

This allows the microscopic, finger-like projections of the small intestine (villi) to recover and assist in normal absorption of nutrients.

### Foods to Avoid

All foods that contain gluten should be avoided in the initial stages of treatment. After allergy desensitization small amounts of gluten normally produce no noticeable ill effect. It's important to read the labels of all packaged or prepared foods.

Some foods that may contain gluten include:

- **Meat products** - any products prepared with breadcrumbs or batter, sausages and other processed meats or smallgoods (unless labeled gluten free), thickened soups, meat pies and frozen meals.
- **Dairy products** - malted milk, some cheese spreads, icecream in a cone and some soymilks.
- **Fruits and vegetables** - canned and sauced vegetables, textured vegetable protein (found in some vegetarian products) and fruit-pie filling.
- **Cereal and baking products** - wheat, wheaten corn flour, semolina, couscous, wheat bran, barley, oats, porridge, breakfast cereals containing wheat, rye, oats or barley, corn or rice cereals containing malt extract, some icing sugar mixtures and baking powder.
- **Pasta and noodles** - spaghetti, pasta, lasagna, gnocchi, hokkein noodles, soba noodles and two-minute noodles.
- **Bread, cakes and biscuits** - all bread, cakes and biscuits prepared with flours from a gluten source.
- **Condiments** - malt vinegar, many mustards, relishes, pickles, salad dressings, sauces, gravy and yeast extracts.
- **Snacks** - liquorice, some lollies and chocolates, packet savoury snacks and some flavoured potato and corn chips.
- **Drinks** - cereal coffee substitutes, milk drink powders.
- **Alcoholic drinks** - beer, stout, ale, Guinness and lager (most beers contain gluten; however, a range of gluten free boutique beers is now available in Australia).

## Naturally Gluten Free Foods

Despite the restrictions, it is still possible to enjoy a wide and varied diet. Corn (maize), rice, soy, potato, buckwheat, millet, quinoa, lentils and amaranth are all gluten free. It's important to read the labels of all packaged or prepared foods.

Some gluten free foods include:

- **Meat products** - unprocessed meat, fish, chicken, bacon, ham off the bone and meats that are frozen or canned but with no sauce.
- **Dairy products** - eggs, full cream milk, low fat milk, evaporated milk, condensed milk, fresh cream, processed or block cheese and some custards and soymilks.
- **Fruits and vegetables** - fresh, canned or frozen but not sauced; fruit juices, nuts and peanut butter.
- **Cereal and baking products** - corn (maize) flour, soya flour, lentil flour, rice (all types), rice flour, rice bran, potato flour, buckwheat, millet, amaranth, breakfast cereals made from corn and rice without malt extract, polenta and psyllium.
- **Bread, cakes and biscuits** - most rice crackers, corn cakes, rice crispbreads, corn tortillas and corn taco shells.
- **Pasta and noodles** - gluten free pasta, rice noodles, rice or bean vermicelli and 100 per cent buckwheat noodles.
- **Condiments** - tomato paste, tahini, jam, honey, maple syrup, cocoa, all kinds of vinegars (except malt), some sauces and some salad dressings.
- **Snacks** - plain chips and corn chips, popcorn and plain chocolate.
- **Drinks** - tea, coffee, mineral water, wine, spirits and liqueurs.