

Coeliac Disease

What is Coeliac Disease?

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition where your body's immune system reacts abnormally to the gluten protein and causes damage to the intestinal wall. This causes inflammation within the gastrointestinal tract and changes to the small intestinal structures that line the surface which absorb nutrients from the food you eat. As such, proper digestion is impaired and the ability to absorb nutrients is greatly reduced.

Due to the nature of this disease being predominantly caused by genetics, it is not uncommon for other allergies and intolerances to be present. For this reason, I recommend undergoing a full food panel to determine what other/rule out other allergies or intolerances which may be contributing.

What Can I eat?

The following grains are gluten-free: Rice, Quinoa, Buckwheat, Amaranth, Corn, Millet, Sorghum. The majority of cakes, biscuits, breads, pasta and pizza contain gluten. Even sausages, salami, ham, sauces, spreads and ice cream can contain gluten so you must check labels of products that you buy.

Beware of hidden gluten in products such as soy sauce. There are, however more and more products becoming available as gluten-free alternatives. However, be aware: just because something is gluten free doesn't mean it is healthy. Many gluten free substitutes are highly processed and still contain large amounts of sugar and additives. Choose gluten free wholefoods for optimal health.

Hidden Gluten: Tricks for new Coeliacs

Avoid Foods that are labelled as "May contain Gluten" or "Contains Gluten". Any packaged food in Australia that contains or could be contaminated with Gluten must be labelled. The following are a list of where Gluten may be hiding on a food label: Baking powder, Beer, stout, lager, ale, Canned soups, Communion hosts, Confectionery, Custard powder, Dressings, gravies and sauces, Hot chips, Hot chocolate, Icing sugar mixture, Flavoured milks, Margarine (may contain breadcrumbs), Medications, Powdered drink flavourings, Sausages and processed meats, Seasoning Stock cubes, Soy milk, Wheaten cornflour, and Yeast extract spreads such as vegemite.

Avoiding Gluten When Out Socialising:

When out socialising be aware that food that doesn't contain Gluten can be contaminated via cooking and preparation. Even alcohol and drinks can be a hidden source of Gluten. Ask how a food is prepared or even phone ahead to scope out the menu, preparation and cooking techniques that a restaurant uses. Book ahead and make sure when you order that they are able to meet your requirements. Once you become familiar with places that offer clean gluten free food you will be able to utilise these when socialising. If you're visiting friends, let them know about your requirements ahead of time. A great strategy is to offer to bring a dish that you can eat to the party. When it comes to drinks: there are gluten free alcohols available. Being aware of alcohol brands will help you make better decisions around party season. The Coeliac Society of Australia has a members section where you can access lists of local Gluten Free establishments. A great resource if you are travelling or new to Coeliac disease

Further information: The following website has further information and support such as recipes and gluten-free friendly restaurants:

The Coeliac Society of Australia: <http://www.coeliacsociety.com.au/index.html>

Example daily diet:

Breakfast: Millet porridge with sliced pear and cashews.

Snack: Pawpaw and a handful of walnuts

Lunch: Salad of red cabbage, celery, green beans, mung beans, brown lentils with chopped parsley, olive oil and salt to season.

Snack: Celery sticks and hummus dip

Dinner: Fresh fish steamed with garlic, rice and steamed vegetables or Quinoa Salad (below)

Breakfast: Chopped banana, pear and pawpaw with ground linseeds and a drizzle of maple syrup. Handful of pecans.

Snack: Rice cakes with tahini (hulled)

Lunch: Roasted chicken with green salad, leek, swede and other vegetable

Snack: Cashew butter on apple slices

Dinner: Kidney bean and vegetable soup with allowed vegetables. Drizzle flaxseed oil over the top to serve, and may serve with gluten-free rice/millet bread.

Recipe:

Quinoa Salad

Cooked quinoa is excellent in hot casseroles and soups, stews, in stir-fries, or cold in salads and is often substituted for rice. This recipe is easily changed around to use different ingredients on your allowed list.

Ingredients ▪ 3/4 cup uncooked quinoa (red, white or black coloured) ▪ 1 cup diced green beans ▪ 1/2 cup chopped celery ▪ 1 cup fresh green peas or finely cubed raw pumpkin ▪ 1/4 cup minced parsley ▪ 1/4 cup chopped walnuts ▪ 3 1cm chopped shallots ▪ juice of 2 lemons ▪ 1 1/2 tbsp maple syrup ▪ 2 cloves minced garlic

Preparation Rinse quinoa and drain. Put in a pot and dry toast until a few grains begin to pop. Add 1 1/2 cups water, bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the quinoa has absorbed all the liquid. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with fork and let cool. Mix vegetables, nuts and parsley in large bowl. Add cooled quinoa and toss to combine. Whisk together lemon, maple syrup and garlic. Pour over salad and combine well. Chill until serving time. You can top with sprouted mung beans for extra crunch! Slice and cook meat to make a complete meal.