

WHO HAS THE COELIAC CONDITION?

COELIAC/CELIAC is a medically diagnosed condition. It is a condition rather than a disease. Coeliac is not contagious; it is inherited. However, there are some circumstances where a person must go on a gluten free diet due to certain injuries or other medical circumstances.

So you have been to the doctor and had a blood test. Many doctors follow the blood test with a referral to a gastroenterologist requesting an endoscope and, in some cases, a colonoscopy. Some doctors will go to the extent of requesting a DNA test for genes.

For a handful of other people, being on a gluten free diet is a requirement after some intervening circumstances. Such circumstances could be severe injuries to any part of the digestive system or undergoing cancer treatment and, for some, permanently after cancer treatment.

People with autoimmune illnesses can benefit greatly by being on a gluten free diet. The underlying condition has most likely been with the person since birth (genetic predisposition). The gluten then agitates the condition: it brings it to the fore. The person has these symptoms instead of the usual bloating,

weight loss/gain, etc. People suffering from arthritis can have some pain relief by switching to a gluten free diet.

Assorted skin problems have been linked to gluten issues. The main ones are acne, dermatitis herpetiformis, eczema and psoriasis. If you have a skin problem, it is worth considering a gluten free diet. Sometimes going dairy-free can also make improvements.

People who are gluten or even wheat intolerant may find being on the gluten free diet easier than being just wheat free. For many, ignoring the symptoms is not an option. They know deep down they will become extremely ill further down the track. They want to avoid these perceived, but sometimes very real illnesses. After talking with many diagnosed coeliacs and comparing them to the gluten/wheat intolerant group, the gluten/wheat-intolerant people can and do suffer equal amounts to, and in some cases, more than diagnosed coeliacs.

There are over 350 health issues linked to gluten consumption: assorted cancers, digestion problems, infertility, auto immune illnesses, all sorts of arthritis, skin issues, vitamin and mineral deficiencies and their related problems, to name a few. The lucky people are the ones who are diagnosed early and have the opportunity to take evasive actions. The 'silent' coeliacs are the ones who have shown no symptoms and suddenly in their late 40s, 50s and 60s assorted health issues invade their life. For many, the problems can be life threatening.

WHAT IS THE SAME?

IF YOU ARE already eating a healthy diet, you are already eating 80 per cent gluten free. The changes will be absolutely minimal. However, if you are a junk food monster and load up on wheat-based (predominately) carbohydrates, then you will have the greatest adjustments. Here is the list of food which are the same.

- All fruit and vegetables: juiced, boiled, raw, stir fry, baked, fried, grilled,¹ canned, frozen, dehydrated, dehydrated and then powdered, roasted, steamed, some pastes.
- All meat: baked, grilled¹, broiled, stir fry, fried, boiled, steamed, roast, most dried meats (jerky).²
- All seeds and nuts: raw, roasted, stir fry, some flavoured, flour, powders, most pastes.

1 Some people grill their food on a hot pan with a touch of oil. This is 100% gluten free. Some people coat their food in flour. The flour is the problem. Change the flour to a recognised gluten free one.

2 Beef jerky without any form of flavouring/marinades is gluten free. Some companies have had their flavoured jerky tested. Frequently, the test results indicate 10 to 17 hours in the drying process is enough to destroy or reduce any gluten to 5 parts per million and less. Always contact the manufacturer to double check their product.

- All oils except those made from gluten based grains, e.g. wheat germ oil.
- All vinegars: except those containing malt.
- All black, green and white teas and coffees, pure forms of cocoa and carob.³
- Most soft drinks and cordials.
- All dairy.
- Some confectionery.
- All wines: reds and whites, some liquours, most fortified drinks, e.g. sherry.
- Most sauces, marinades, jams.
- Some desserts: jelly/jello, pavlova, most flourless cakes, toffees, most traditional sweets.

3 Flavoured teas and coffees in cans similar to soft drink cans, frequently have gluten in the drinks.