

Your Guide to Becoming a Gluten Sleuth

By Erika Krull

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The information in this report should not be considered medical advice. It is not a substitute for seeing a medical professional. This report was created with the intent of helping you understand more about gluten and learn how to avoid it. If you are experiencing serious medical problems, **please seek proper medical treatment and consultation.**

What To Expect From the Gluten Free Diet Guide Newsletter

Hello! I want to welcome you to the Gluten Free Diet Guide email newsletter! I'm so happy you've decided to invite me into your inbox every now and then. You'll get to know me better as you read my messages, and I hope to get to know you as well.

If you ever have a question about gluten or something you find on my website, please contact me at elkrull@gluten-free-diet-guide.com. I'm not a dietician, a nurse, or a doctor, but I can certainly dig around and do research. I'll give you the best answer I can and give you a resource to find more if I don't have enough information.

When you see an email from me in your inbox, you'll be getting several things.

Value – I want you to look forward to my emails because you learn something new, read something positive, or just appreciate good information coming right to you (instead of hunting for it). You'll find links to my website and sometimes other websites if I think you'll really find it useful. If I tell you about a product, it will be because I have a lot of confidence in it.

Positivity – I know that the gluten free lifestyle can have its ups and downs, but I want you to feel encouraged that things will be OK. There's a constant learning curve to living gluten free, and it helps when you feel like someone is there to help.

Availability – If you ever have a question or comment about my emails or website, you can always email me at elkrull@gluten-free-diet-guide.com. And if you forget this is here in your free report, check the "About" page to find it there. I'll do everything I can to help you find the answers you need and will get back to you as quickly as I am able. I check my email nearly every day, so even if I can't get your answer right away, I'll be sure to at least get back to you and let you know I'm working on it.

Frequency – You'll get emails about twice a week, sometimes three. I'll send out an update when I have new content on the website or something new and timely is happening. I'll also send other great information that you can use anytime.

[Click Here to explore the Gluten Free Diet Guide](#)

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You Need To Avoid Gluten – How Do You Find It?

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is simple and straight-forward. *Find all potential sources of gluten in your food and avoid those completely. Do this every day of your life to remain healthy and free of gluten contamination symptoms.*

OK, that may sound simple, but how does that work in everyday life? Simple, yes. Straight-forward, not so much.

Gluten is the trouble-making ingredient you're supposed to avoid when going on a gluten free diet. But how do you avoid something if you aren't sure what it is or where to find it? I'll admit, this can be a challenge. It's just not as obvious I'd like it to be, but once you learn how to spot it you'll feel more confident about grocery shopping. Also, knowing what gluten is and how it works in food can help you understand how to cook with gluten free ingredients.

[Click Here for Gluten Free Chicken Recipes](#)

What Is This Gluten Stuff?

Gluten is the stretchy gluey stuff that helps bread, pizza crust, and other baked goods get nice puffy air pockets. It creates a flexible structure that helps each baked good hang together without necessarily being tough or chewy. When a baker knows how to properly activate the gluten protein, it will start doing its thing. The presence of gluten has influenced baking techniques for decades, even centuries.

Sorry, I'm not trying to build up gluten as some kind of magical essence that turns good food into great food. It's just one of many ingredients with useful properties out there in the world. It happens that wheat is commonly grown and used across the world, and it affects a lot of food in Western cultures.

Ready for a little science? Gluten is made up of two types of proteins – one is the gliadins, the other is the glutenins. In the digestive tract, these proteins each break down further into different peptides. These peptides are made of strings of amino acids, somewhat like a string of pearls. It's the make-up of some of these peptides that causes trouble for people with celiac disease. The gliadin variety of gluten proteins is the most damaging, but some research has shown adverse reactions to the glutenin proteins as well.

Where Does Gluten Lurk In My Food?

Up to this point, you have probably been picturing a wheat stalk as your eternal foe, your Kryptonite. Ah, but don't lull yourself into thinking that "wheat free" is synonymous with "gluten free". Wheat may be the most obvious grain to avoid, but gluten is also present in rye and barley. I can't honestly think of many products containing rye that wouldn't also

have wheat in them (like cereal or bread). While you clearly have to look out for it, rye should be much easier to avoid than wheat.

Caramel coloring and malt flavoring are made from barley. Barley hops also have gluten in them, so all regular beer makes the “not safe” list. There are a few brands that are specifically labeled “gluten free” because they are brewed with completely different grains (and no barley whatsoever).

Some beer companies have stated that “low barley beer” is safe for celiacs, but that seems like an unnecessary risk. Even if you have a mild sensitivity to gluten, you’re still sensitive and gluten free beer is the only safe option.

OK, so no pasta, no bread, no pizza, no regular beer, no cakes or cookies made with any sort of wheat-based flour? I wish I could say it was that easy. Through the miracles of modern food manufacturing, gluten-containing grains have been transformed in numerous widely used ingredients in all sorts of processed foods.

Would you like a little malt flavoring (barley) in your cereal? How about a thickening agent (wheat flour) in your prepackaged chicken broth? What about that wheat-brewed soy sauce? And chip flavorings, and Play-Doh (not even a food!), and Twizzlers, and in your mixed nuts, in some processed meats, in your cosmetics, as a filler in some medications, toothpaste, and certain pasta sauces? Yeah, wow.

The list of unbelievable hiding places goes on and on. Label-reading needs to become one of your earliest gluten free habits.

[Click Here For Gluten Free Shampoo and Conditioner](#)

Some Confusion – Is It Safe Or Not?

Now that I have you on high alert (I know, hang in there), it’s time to throw a few more things at you. Even when you think you know what you are reading, you might get a little confused about a few things.

Despite its name, Maltodextrin is NOT made from malt (barley), and should be safe if manufactured in the United States. Elsewhere, it can be made from wheat. Also MSG and “modified food starch” are NOT made from wheat in the US, though you may have other reasons to possibly avoid MSG.

Some shady-looking ingredients should make you look twice and ask someone at the food company to be sure. These include the following: fillers, binders, stabilizers, and the ever-mysterious “natural flavors”.

Yeah, gluten is natural, but that doesn’t mean you want to eat it! And beware of anything that says it’s “enriched” unless you know exactly what the company is referring to. Again, make a phone call or look up the company website.

Some food manufacturers will always state whether these vague terms refer to a gluten source. It's a "We Will Never Hide Gluten" type of labeling policy, which I think all manufacturers should adopt. You have to know which companies do this so you have some ability to shop for groceries and keep a sane mind.

Contamination? But I'm Not Eating Poison

Well, in a way you are. Gluten is guaranteed to harm you in some way if you have a gluten sensitivity or celiac disease. When gluten free foods are processed in a facility where other gluten-containing products are made, there's a risk of the gluten crossing over and leave a trace contamination on the gluten free product.

This cross-contamination is sometimes enough to cause people problems, which is why some food companies are making more effort to label this now.

The gluten free diet is really different from low sodium, diabetic, or low fat diets. With these diets, the goal is to reduce the offending ingredient as much as possible, but having a trace amount isn't necessarily harmful.

With gluten sensitivities and true food allergies like for peanut and shellfish, you have to be so vigilant because a tiny amount is all it takes to put you at risk. You must know if there is the remote possibility of even a half-molecule of the problem ingredient present. It can make you seem a little bit obsessive-compulsive, but it's completely justified.

Different companies have different policies for labeling potential cross-contamination. Two companies I frequently rely on are Kraft and the Walmart brand. They will label an allergen if there is even a chance that it could be cross-contaminated.

Walmart's canned tomato products have a wheat warning on the label. I haven't a clue what else is in that factory that puts canned tomatoes at risk, but I'm glad they tell me about it.

They will also sometimes directly label something as "gluten free" or "naturally gluten free". Kraft will also label allergens if there is any risk of cross contamination. You'll need to just start asking and calling companies to get your own short list of truly safe food. If you are in doubt, don't get it.

[Click Here For Gluten Free Pasta Recipes](#)

So Is It Gluten Free Or Not? Just Tell Me!

On some magical day, the food industry and the FDA will have a completely universal labeling system where everything is 100% clear and not a single gluten particle escapes notice. Unfortunately, that day is not today.

In order to be truly safe, you always have to consider cross-contamination and examine that “Gluten Free” label with a squinty eye. Many times I’ve seen something labeled “Gluten Free” in bold letters across the top, only to find a smaller warning on the back that says the product is not made in a gluten free facility. This, my friends, is the point where you have to make a decision based on your health and risk aversion.

The whole cross-contamination thing has caused me to come up with two general risk categories – “gluten free by ingredient” and “gluten free from a safe facility”. This is really for products that are processed in some way (not like fresh fruits or vegetables).

This distinction is important for you to understand as you make your food choices and determine how much risk you are willing to accept. If you want to be sure you don’t let an iota of gluten past your lips, then the gluten free facility is your friend.

An acceptable alternative is a stout practice of cleaning and testing product lines when something is made in a shared facility. But, if you are OK with the minute risk of cross-contamination being present, you can probably relax your eye a bit when you see the words “gluten free” on a label. Just be sure you know what your acceptable risk is so you know what to look for (especially helpful if someone else does your shopping for you).

Let’s Go Shopping For Gluten Free Food

So, what can you take away from all this? That label reading is really really important, and that gluten free doesn’t always mean completely gluten free, and that it’s helpful to carry a cell phone in the grocery store.

You are in charge of your own health, and knowing this important information can make it a lot easier to get through the grocery store in one piece. Watch for the small print – it makes a difference!

[Click Here for Gluten Free Dessert Recipes](#)

Gluten Ingredients To Look Out For

Use this handy list of gluten ingredients so you know what to look for and avoid. After you catch a few of these ingredients a few times on actual products, you’ll start to recognize some of the terms.

BARLEY DERIVED INGREDIENTS

SAMINO PEPTIDE COMPLEX

BARLEY EXTRACT

HORDEUM VULGARE (BARLEY) EXTRACT

PHYTOSPHINGOSINE EXTRACT

BARLEY LIPIDS

WHEAT DERIVED INGREDIENTS

AMP-ISOSTEAROYL HYDROLYZED WHEAT PROTEIN
DISODIUM WHEATGERMAMIDO PEG-2 SULFOSUCCINATE
HYDROLYZED WHEAT GLUTEN
HYDROLYZED WHEAT PROTEIN
HYDROLYZED WHEAT PROTEIN PG-PROPYL SILANETRIOL
HYDROLYZED WHEAT STARCH
HYDROXYPROPYLTRIMONIUM HYDROLYZED WHEAT PROTEIN

STEARYLDIMONIUMHYDROXYPROPYL
HYDROLYZED WHEAT PROTEIN
WHEAT AMINO ACIDS
WHEAT BRAN EXTRACT
WHEAT GERM EXTRACT
WHEAT GERM GLYCERIDES
WHEAT GERM OIL
WHEAT GERMAMIDOPROPYLDIMONIUM HYDROXYPROPYL
WHEAT (TRITICUM VULGARE) BRAN EXTRACT
TRITICUM VULGARE (WHEAT) FLOUR LIPIDS
TRITICUM VULGARE (WHEAT) GERM EXTRACT
TRITICUM VULGARE (WHEAT) GERM OIL
VITAMIN E DERIVED FROM WHEAT GERM OIL

OAT DERIVED INGREDIENTS

SAVENA SATIVA (OAT) FLOUR
AVENA SATIVA (OAT) KERNEL PROTEIN
OAT (AVENA SATIVA) EXTRACT
OAT BETA GLUCANOAT EXTRACT
OAT FLOURSODIUM LAUROYL
OAT AMINO ACIDS

MALT FLAVORING, MALT SYRUP, MALTED MILK, MALTED EXTRACT

SPELT, SEMOLINA

This will cover much of what you'll find in personal products and food. You can check out a much longer and detailed list here at Celiac.com of possible gluten ingredients. I haven't heard of some of them, but it's worth checking out. As you read more and more labels, you may find a few on that list that you run across more often than others.

Why Do I Need a Gluten Free Diet? Is This Really Necessary?

You've just heard the news from your doctor. Or maybe you've come to the conclusion on your own, perhaps after conflicting medical tests and your unending list of symptoms. Still,

this is the moment of truth – you’re starting a gluten free diet. The kicker is you have no idea what you’re doing.

Going low fat? Cut down on pizza and baby back ribs. Going low sodium? Throw out the salt shaker. Going gluten free? Hmm...can you repeat the question? That’s how our family was when my husband had to start a gluten free diet.

We vaguely knew what gluten was, we knew how miserable he felt, but we didn’t have any idea how they were connected. And once we heard the news, then what? Was this dramatic change really necessary, and would I have to throw out everything in my kitchen to make it happen?

It was a challenge at first, but we survived it. Let me walk you through the basics of what gluten is, where it lurks, what your celiac or gluten sensitivity symptoms might look like, and how gluten can really hurt someone who needs to avoid it.

What Is This Gluten Stuff Anyway?

The first few weeks of grocery shopping after my husband’s diagnosis were disorienting and exhausting. Gluten – really? If it jumped off the ingredient label and hit me in the nose, would I know it was gluten?

Label-reading can be tough because gluten comes from a handful of different grains and is made into a million different ingredients not labeled as “this looks a lot like gluten.” Gluten is a protein combination found in wheat, barley, and rye.

Kneading activates the gluten protein in bread dough, creating a strong but flexible. Oats do not technically contain gluten, but it is so often grown and processed near wheat fields that the risk of cross-contamination is pretty good. So-called “clean” oats are grown and processed in isolated fields, with dedicated equipment, and with frequent testing to eliminate this contamination risk.

[Click Here For Gluten Free Bread Recipes](#)

I Had No Idea Gluten Could Be In That

OK, so you ditch the bread, pasta, donuts, and pizza crust, and that big bag of flour on the back shelf. That’ll do it, right? Well, it’s a good start, but it’s not enough. A gluten free diet goes way beyond the obvious sources. You’ll need to crack out your reading glasses and get cozy with food labels from now on.

Gluten can be found in malt flavoring (oh no – check nearly any mainstream cereal box), “natural flavoring” (one of those nebulous ingredients near the end of many labels), and random occurrences of wheat flour (like some potato chips or nut mixes). See what I mean? It’s a lot like spotting Waldo in one of those books, except that Waldo sometimes moves around and changes his shirt without telling you.

Feeling Sick In A Hundred Different Ways

Did you really hear something about “contamination”? Yes, you did. For some people, gluten is essentially a poison. It is to be avoided completely and consistently. Otherwise, they risk uncomfortable symptoms and potential bodily harm.

Gluten sensitivity and celiac disease can share very similar symptoms. But according to current research, only celiac disease shows evidence of true intestinal damage. These symptoms can include diarrhea, stomach cramps, marked or unintended weight loss, a “foggy brain” feeling, headaches, general fatigue, abdominal pain, bloating, joint pain, another medical condition seeming worse or failing to improve, depression, irritability, muscle cramps, mouth sores and other dental problems.

Children may have stunted growth, “failure to thrive”, or may appear sickly and have some of the other symptoms described above. Some have found that behavioral problems and autism have been linked to celiac disease and gluten sensitivity. While this is somewhat controversial and is not yet conclusive, more experts continue to look into the connections.

The list of possible symptoms is a long and winding road, and the end result for each person doesn't always spell something obvious like, “Hey, I have a problem with gluten!” Some have very few, if any obvious symptoms, and it's only confirmed when they get a colonoscopy (often because of some other ongoing medical treatment or evaluation). Others have a wide range of symptoms all the time. You may notice that not all of the symptoms are digestive in nature.

The key thing to remember is that a person with true untreated celiac disease is also experiencing malabsorption of nutrients from their food. Food comes in, but their body can't get much from it. Over time, these symptoms or changes develop and take their toll.

Celiac symptoms are commonly overlooked, misinterpreted, mistreated, ignored, or minimized for many years before a proper diagnosis is discovered. And who could blame anyone for taking that long to figure it out?

With that wide range of symptoms, problems could be easily written off as harmless issues with no connection to a larger picture. It's not reasonable to assume that any random stomachache or period of fatigue is automatically the result of a lifelong medical problem. That sounds over-dramatic, right?

When it starts to affect your life in a way you can't ignore, that's usually when the pieces fall together. Only when my husband started losing a dramatic amount of weight did we really take action to solve the problem. Once we got the diagnosis and looked in the rear-view mirror, we easily saw the symptoms we'd misread.

[Click Here for my go-to all-purpose Gluten Free Flour](#)

Inflammation Is A Very Bad Thing

Here's the biggest reason why anyone diagnosed with celiac disease absolutely needs to avoid gluten at all cost – bodily damage from chronic inflammation. Remember all that about malabsorption of nutrients? The reason that happens is because gluten causes an auto-immune response in the intestines, causing a lot of inflammation.

Basically, the body attacks itself when gluten is around. This relentless inflammation causes obvious symptoms like pain and discomfort. It also starts to destroy the villi (tiny finger-like projections that line the digestive tract) that do all the nutrient absorption. As time goes on, the inflammation wears these villi down to a nub. Enter diarrhea, malabsorption, weight loss, fatigue, headaches, and general symptoms of poor nutrition.

Fortunately, there's a way to restore the digestive tract to its original purpose and structure. It's called...the gluten free diet. Yep, that's it. At this point, the complete avoidance of gluten is the treatment. Medication can sometimes help the symptoms, or you may need other treatments while healing up initially. But food is literally your medicine once you get a celiac diagnosis.

And for those wondering about gluten sensitivity, you may get any of the above-mentioned symptoms but have no (or very little) evidence of damage to your digestive tract. But even so, who wants to be sick like that all the time? Your body can't function well if it's constantly reeling from symptom episodes and suffering from poor nutrition. In general, the treatment for any level of gluten sensitivity is a gluten free diet.

[Click Here for Gluten Free Lotion](#)

Gluten Free Diet – It's Good To Be Healthy Again

The entire goal of a gluten free diet is to help your body heal and keep it healthy. Yes, starting out can be confusing and frustrating. Yes, you will likely miss foods you used to eat (that's normal and OK). Yes, you may have to explain yourself for a while until people understand what you're talking about. But through all this, you gain a priceless gift – a healthier body for you to use and enjoy.

For those of you with other underlying medical problems, you may still have to deal with those. But chances are good you'll manage them better without all the symptoms, inflammation, and nutrient malabsorption. It's a new landscape with ups and downs, but you'll find that you can eat many delicious things on a gluten free diet. It's not like you're being told to go live on the moon (though it may feel like it at first). Every wonderful tasty gluten free food can be found right here on earth.

If you are just starting out on a gluten free diet, or if you are recovering from being “glutened”, focus on having naturally gluten free foods as much as you can. That includes

fruits, veggies, rice, and plain cut meats. That doesn't mean your food has to be boring, but you'll have the best chance to avoid gluten if you keep things simple for a while.

If you really trust a few specialty gluten free foods like pasta or bread mixes, have those too, if you like. Sometimes it's the mainstream products that say they are gluten free, or just don't show any obvious gluten ingredients, that get troublesome. Then, when you feel better or more comfortable with your food choices, you can start opening up your selection again.

When you are new to the gluten free diet, do remember that your body will be healing from damage. It can take several months to clear this up. Keeping your diet fairly simple and without too many new foods can also give you time to learn about label reading, cross contamination, etc. Add new foods slowly so you can gauge your reaction to them.

Keep in mind that sensitivity to dairy products is common. A newly diagnosed person may notice this more prominently at first, and it may get better over time. Or they may end up with a long-term sensitivity that they'll always need to account for. This could be due to lactose (natural sugar) or casein (protein). Other sensitivities can include corn, soy, and eggs. Each person is different, but dairy sensitivity is pretty likely following a new diagnosis.

[Be sure to speak to a dietician to ensure that you aren't missing out on important nutrients while you heal.](#) Your body has already had trouble absorbing nutrients before your diagnosis, so let a dietician help you get a diet plan that covers your needs and deficiencies. And if you've been diagnosed a while ago, a visit with a dietician is still a good idea.

After we get set in our patterns and habits, we tend to "drift" a little from our original intents. It's just human nature and it's easy to forget or misremember some of the good information you may have received in the beginning.

[Click Here for Gluten Free Lipstick and Lip Gloss](#)

Help Another Person With Gluten Sensitivity

I know that when we decided to set up our 100% gluten free house, the task was simply daunting. We had to start over with so many food items in our house. Shopping for sour cream one time took me, no joke, nearly two hours hopping from store to store. I'm pretty sure I decided to give up and make something without sour cream that night!

I didn't know what suspicious ingredient names to look for, I didn't really think about contacting companies, labeling policies, doing product research ahead of time, or any of that. We didn't get a spectacular set of start-up information from my husband's doctor. We

had to kind of start digging around on our own, buying books, looking stuff up online, etc. If I'd had a concise guide in my hands, I might have saved myself some grief in the beginning.

If you know of someone else that could use this information, **please feel free to pass this report to them**. It is free and I encourage you to share it if you think it would help. It's meant to be a handy guide for people who've already been eating gluten free for a while and for those just starting out.

The only requirement I have is that you leave this report 100% intact as it is. Please do not edit or change anything in here. Thank you so much!

Take care and you'll be hearing more from me soon. Again, if you need to contact me, please do so at elkrull@gluten-free-diet-guide.com.

Erika Krull

Gluten Free Diet Guide