



## Medical Nutrition Therapy: Gluten Free

What is a gluten free diet?

A strict gluten-free diet (GFD) is the only treatment for CD & DH and requires the lifelong elimination of all foods containing wheat, barley, rye, related cereal grains and commercial oats.

Why do I need to follow a gluten free diet

A GFD will help your small intestine to heal and will eventually result in elimination of the symptoms, which can include: diarrhea, constipation, stomach pain, weight loss, tiredness, low iron levels and the skin rash in DH. The diet also reduces the risk of developing osteoporosis, reduced fertility, lymphoma and potentially other autoimmune disorders. Even if you are symptom free, you must follow the diet to reduce the risk of these long-term complications.

Gluten is a general name for the storage proteins (prolamins) found in wheat, barley, rye and related cereal grains – triticale, spelt and kamut. If you have celiac disease (CD) or dermatitis herpetiformis (DH), a skin form of celiac disease, even a small amount of gluten is harmful. CD is a disease of chronic inflammation in the small intestine (impairing absorption of nutrients) and can occur in a variety of other organs in the body such as the skin, joints, bones, liver, pancreas, thyroid gland, nervous system, and reproductive tract. When coeliac disease remains undiagnosed or untreated for an extended period of time, the inflammation can cause complications such as osteoporosis, infertility and liver disease. Poor absorption of nutrients can also lead to problems such as anaemia and vitamin deficiencies. In CD, gluten damages the small intestine resulting in poor absorption of nutrients. In DH, gluten causes skin rashes and itching and also damages the small intestine.

It is best to you take steps to rule out Celiac Disease before initiating a gluten free diet. You may have a non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS) or gluten sensitivity. NCGS is the clinical state of individuals when ingestion of gluten leads to intestinal and/or other non-intestinal symptoms, and feel better on a gluten free diet. In NCGS, there no villous atrophy.

It is highly recommended to consult with a Dietitian to implement a gluten free diet, as the diet may be deficient in fibre, B vitamins, and iron, and the diet is complex. If you want learn steps you can take to rule out Celiac Disease, or schedule a consultation on following a GFD, please contact [Jenneke@therapeuticmeals.com](mailto:Jenneke@therapeuticmeals.com).

Therapeutic Meals are all gluten free, but are **not** made in a gluten free facility at this time. For those who are following a strict GFD, Therapeutic Meals is not appropriate, until the company acquires a gluten free facility. For those who are following a gluten free diet, do not have Celiac Disease, *and* can tolerate cross-contamination levels of gluten, Therapeutic Meals is appropriate.