

Home Economics and Coeliac Disease

Dear _____ (Teachers Name)

I am the parent/guardian of:

_____ and I would like to take this opportunity to make you aware that my child has coeliac disease. This is a medical condition which causes my child to react to gluten which is a protein found in wheat, barley, oats and rye. Some food examples are listed below. A strict gluten-free diet is the only treatment for Coeliac Disease. Someone with coeliac disease needs to avoid ALL gluten, ALL the time. Coeliac disease is more than a food allergy. It's an autoimmune disease and it's not contagious. If a coeliac eats gluten the lining of the small intestine becomes damaged, reducing the ability to absorb the nutrients from food.

I wanted to make you aware of this as I know cooking is a component of the subject home economics and you will be in charge of all cooking and all the students who are doing the cooking. Because food is involved, there is a risk that my child could consume or be exposed to gluten and be very sick. I would really appreciate if you could put all precautions in place to allow my child participate in all aspects of the subject while also protecting my child's health. Below I have outlined some foods that are and are not safe for my child. Cross- contamination also poses a risk to my child because it risks gluten gets into their gluten free food which will still make them sick. I have also outlined some tips on preventing cross-contamination.

What can my child eat and not eat?

Gluten is found in many manufactured food products including (but not limited to);

- Flour
- Bread, wraps, rolls
- Pizza
- Sauces, marinades and gravies
- Crackers
- Pasta
- Noodles
- Wheat
- barley
- rye
- Cakes, muffins, pastries, puddings, desserts
- Biscuits
- Breakfast cereals
- Confectionary, sweets, chocolate
- Sausages, black and white puddings
- Snacks
- There are others

If a coeliac would like to consume these, they must choose gluten free versions. Gluten free versions can be labelled gluten free or can be found in the Coeliac Society Food List. As a member of the Coeliac Society of Ireland we receive a Food List which contains a detailed list of supplier's/supermarket products that are safe. We also have updates emailed to us if a product is removed from the book, as no longer considered safe to eat under the guidelines. Therefore, I have enclosed a list of foods (relative to the subject) that are safe and I will inform you accordingly of any amendments. Each year our List is updated, so please only use the most current information from me/us. Product ingredients or manufacturing processes can change without that being apparent from labels.

There are lots of naturally gluten free foods that coeliacs can eat and these are also known as single ingredient foods. The list below are foods that are naturally gluten free:

- All fresh meat, chicken and fish (without crumbs or sauces). E.g. the packs of stewing steak, plain chicken breast in packs in the supermarket etc.
- Eggs
- All fresh fruit and vegetables
- Fresh herbs (dried herbs can contain gluten)
- Dried beans, peas, lentils and pulses (check labels as some lentils carry a "may contain gluten" warning)
- Plain nuts and seeds
- Milk; plain yoghurt (check the List for flavoured yoghurts); cream, unflavoured salted or unsalted butter; unflavoured, natural cheese e.g. cheddar, edam, parmesan.

- Jam, marmalade, honey, granulated sugar, molasses, golden syrup, maple syrup (icing sugar often has gluten – check the food list for suitable brands)
- Rice, corn, potatoes
- Flours made from rice, corn, potatoes, chickpeas (gram flour), tapioca, buckwheat (but not Bulgar Wheat) and polenta
- Pure fats and oils (e.g. olive oil, rapeseed oil)
- Gluten free vinegars (white, wine, distilled and balsamic. Malt vinegar is not suitable)
- Pure fruit juices

Please note when sauces, seasoning or any ingredient is added to any of the above foods, there is a risk they are not gluten free.

Cooking and kitchen precautions

As much as a crumb can damage my child's gut. When preparing gluten free food, it is essential to avoid cross contamination. It is important that the child's cooking partner in class is aware of this so the partner can also do all they can to avoid cross-contamination. Cross contamination results when gluten from gluten-containing foods is transferred to gluten-free foods. Cross contamination is most likely to occur when handling or storing a gluten free product with or near foods which contain gluten. If you are preparing gluten-containing foods near gluten-free foods, there is a risk of cross-contamination. Here are some tips to prevent cross contamination in the class;

- Keep any gluten-free food away from any gluten-containing foods at all times.
- Make sure the area used by my child is thoroughly cleaned for gluten-free preparation. When cleaning an area where gluten containing food has been prepared, dry wipe the area with a disposable towel to remove visible crumbs prior to cleaning and sanitising. Clean with hot soapy water.
- Make sure the same knives, utensils or chopping boards are not shared between students and between gluten-free and gluten-containing preparation areas.
- Make sure the pot/pan used for gluten free food is washed thoroughly before cooking. If pots need to be used for both gluten-free and gluten-containing foods, wash the pots thoroughly with hot soapy water between use.
- Do not carry out or allow gluten-free food preparation while/after gluten-containing preparation without changing gloves, aprons or washing hands.
- Store gluten-free foods separately and above gluten containing foods, label clearly and wrap well.
- If toast is needed, please acquire a gluten free toaster for my child. To make gluten free toast a separate toaster is needed to prevent cross-contamination. Toaster bags are another option or you can grill bread rather than use a toaster. Just ensure the gluten-free bread is on a thoroughly cleaned tray, is cooked on the top shelf if grilling gluten-containing food at the same time and kept well away from gluten containing products.

- Keep separate jars of jams, condiments and separate butter/spread for gluten-free foods. Remember, use different butter knives or dishes and jam spoons to prevent breadcrumbs from mixing between separate gluten-free and gluten-containing condiments
- Do not fry gluten-free foods/chips in fryers used for frying crumbed or coated foods.
- Dedicate cleaning cloths to gluten-free preparation.
- If gluten-free foods need to be cooked in the same oven as gluten-containing foods, cook the gluten-free ones on the top level.

Other precautions

- Although coeliac disease is a serious condition, it's important my child feels as normal as any other pupil. Please be sure that my child's home economics experience is as normal as possible by having him or her take part in as many aspects of the course as is possible. Please implement as many strategies as possible to allow gluten-free cooking so my child can feel comfortable cooking and be able to enjoy what they make.
 - If my child is glutened – If glutened by ingestion or cross contamination my child can experience an array of symptoms including:
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Remember: Not everyone with coeliac disease will have immediate symptoms.

- If my child is glutened they may need to rest and recover or
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Communication

Please feel free to contact me/us anytime if you have any questions or concerns, no matter how small they may seem. Thank you!

Parent/Guardian 1: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email _____

Parent/Guardian 2 : _____

Contact Number: _____

Email _____