





## What is gluten?



**Gluten is a natural protein found in various kitchen staples, including wheat, barley, rye, oats, and triticale. Typically, gluten provides structure, acting as an adhesive in products such as bread and pasta.**

**Foods typically containing gluten include:**

- Bread
- Baked goods such as pastries and cakes
- Pasta
- Cereal
- Malted products
- Imitation meat
- Soy sauce
- Beer

Additionally, gluten can also be found in unexpected food products as a stabilising agent, including soup, ice cream, ketchup, and gravy.

## Why is gluten harmful?

For an estimated 1 in 100 people across the globe, gluten can trigger a severe autoimmune disease known as coeliac disease. When ingested, the immune system falsely attacks the small intestine, damaging the lining responsible for nutrient absorption.

Likewise, the long-term health effects of coeliac disease are also dangerous. Those impacted have twice the risk of developing coronary artery disease and 4 times the risk of suffering from small bowel cancers. Moreover, when left untreated, secondary autoimmune diseases include Type 1 diabetes and multiple sclerosis and complications such as infertility, migraines, and osteoporosis can form due to coeliac disease.

The only treatment of coeliac disease is altogether avoiding the consumption of gluten.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Celiac Disease Foundation, 2022, <https://celiac.org/about-celiac-disease/what-is-celiac-disease/>





## Gluten-free food and the law

The provision of gluten-free foods in commercial kitchens is guided by the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Safety Standard 3.2.2, with three critical protocols deemed essential:

- Sourcing gluten-free ingredients and products.
- Segregation during storage, food handling, display and plating.
- Service requirements for communication throughout all stages of service, from the description of menu items and food preparation to customer service.

## Gluten-free food preparation

Avoiding cross-contamination between gluten-inclusive and gluten-free foods throughout the entire preparation and cooking process is essential for foodservice businesses. Understanding that as little as 50mg of gluten, or a crumb on a chopping board, can damage a person's small intestine with coeliac disease.

Follow these tips to prepare gluten-free food safely:



1

Clean all utensils, such as knives and tongs, and prepare surfaces such as cutting boards and benches regularly, including preparing meals to avoid cross-contamination.



2

If possible, designate certain utensils for handling gluten-free food only. Colour-coded items such as cutting boards, tongs, and knives help distinguish safe for use quickly and easily.



3

Make sure kitchen staff clean and sanitise hands with food-safe cleaning products when handling different ingredients.



4

Change cooking oil for fried foods and boiling water for pasta portions between each meal. Slight traces of gluten found within the liquid can contaminate safe foods.



5

Utilise different appliances and utensils for high-risk items such as bread and baked goods, including toasters, sandwich presses, sifters, and colanders.



6

Buy duplicates of food compendiums that can be easily contaminated by gluten crumbs, including butter and spreads. Ensure to label each effectively.



## Storage and labelling

To avoid accidental cross-contamination, gluten-free ingredients and cooked meals should be stored safely and labelled.

Follow the following tips to store gluten-free food safely:



1

Create a practical labelling system that quickly identifies gluten-free foods. Use standard features, including colours and shapes, to avoid confusion between staff.



2

Store gluten-free food separately from gluten-inclusive meals. If possible, designate specific fridge and shelf space that is easily identifiable with labels.



3

When storing or transporting gluten-free food, utilise airtight containers or food-safe coverings such as cling wraps or zipper bags.

## Communicating about gluten-free meals with patrons

In Australia, the guidelines for gluten-free food labelling are stipulated under the law. Compared to the United States and European Union, which allows for 20 parts per million (PPM), the Australian guidelines are six times stricter, allowing a threshold of only 3ppm for all foods labelled 'gluten-free'.

For commercial kitchens, this is important to remember when communicating with customers. In particular, restaurant and kitchen managers should develop clearly labelled menus that take the dangerous guesswork out of identifying gluten-free meals for both patrons and staff. Similarly, it is essential to use safe language under the law.



**The accepted terms are:**

- 'Gluten Free' - No detectable gluten
- 'Low Gluten' - No more than 200ppm of gluten
- 'Contains Gluten' - More than 200ppm of gluten

Terms including 'No added gluten', 'gluten friendly' and '99% gluten free' are unacceptable. Likewise, 'May contain traces of gluten' or 'Made in a facility that processes gluten' should never be used alongside a 'Gluten free' claim.



## Staff training

Putting in place safe preparation, storage, and labelling processes is the first step. However, it is essential to follow through with comprehensive staff training.

Both kitchen and wait staff should undergo training when first entering the foodservice industry, and then every three years to keep up to date with the latest processes. The following formal course provides an ideal solution.

### **Coeliac Australia's Gluten-Free Online Training Module**

Coeliac Australia is the national registered charity supporting Australians with coeliac disease and associated conditions requiring a gluten-free diet. The Gluten-Free Online Training module is an interactive and engaging module that ensures that the learner has a strong knowledge of the best practice principles and will have the capacity to implement them into a commercial kitchen.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Coeliac Australia, 2022, <https://www.coeliac.org.au/s/for-business/resources-for-business>



## What is Coeliac Disease?

In people with coeliac disease, the immune system reacts abnormally to gluten (a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats), causing small bowel damage. The villi which line the bowel become inflamed and flattened. This is referred to as villous atrophy. Villous atrophy reduces the surface area of the bowel available for nutrient absorption, which can lead to various gastrointestinal and malabsorptive symptoms. Symptoms can also be caused by chronic inflammation in other parts of the body.

A number of serious health consequences can result if the condition is not diagnosed and treated properly.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Coeliac Australia, 2022, <https://www.coeliac.org.au/>

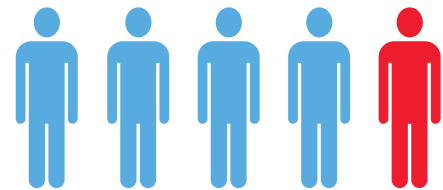


# Who gets coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease can develop at any age and affects both men and women. You must be born with the genetic predisposition to develop coeliac disease. Environmental factors play an important role in triggering coeliac disease in infancy, childhood or later in life.

## How common is the condition?

Coeliac disease affects on average approximately 1 in 70 Australians. However, around 80% of this number remain undiagnosed. This means the vast majority of Australians who have coeliac disease don't yet know it. Although better diagnosis rates in recent years can be partially attributed to improved awareness of the condition, there has also been a true increase in the incidence of coeliac disease.



4 out of 5

People remain undiagnosed

## Can coeliac disease be cured?

People with coeliac disease remain sensitive to gluten throughout their life, so in this sense they are never cured. However, a strict gluten free diet does allow the condition to be managed effectively.

A strict, lifelong gluten free diet is currently the only recognised medical treatment for coeliac disease. By removing the cause of the disease, a gluten free diet allows the small bowel lining to heal and symptoms to resolve. As long as the gluten free diet is strictly adhered to, problems arising from coeliac disease should not return. Relapse occurs if gluten is reintroduced into the diet.



## What are the long term risks of undiagnosed and untreated coeliac disease?

The long term consequences of untreated coeliac disease are related to chronic systemic inflammation, poor nutrition and malabsorption of nutrients.

Fortunately, timely diagnosis of coeliac disease and treatment with a gluten free diet can prevent or reverse many of the associated health conditions.<sup>4</sup>

## Classic symptoms of coeliac disease may include:

- Diarrhoea, constipation, and smelly faeces
- Fatigue
- Skin reactions
- Depression and anxiety
- Unexplained weight loss
- Iron-deficiency anemia
- Autoimmune disorders
- Joint and muscle pain
- Abdominal pain and bloating after consuming gluten

<sup>4</sup> Coeliac Australia, 2022, <https://www.coeliac.org.au/s/coeliac-disease>



# Food Advisory Labels

Food labels are essential commercial kitchen supplies in the implementation of efficient and sustainable food safety processes. Creating a consistent food labelling system within a commercial kitchen environment ensures that only the food that is the most safe is served to patrons.

Fildes Food Safety offers a range of food advisory labels, in particular allergen stickers to promote best practice in commercial kitchens. The range of food labels available from Fildes Food Safety features permanent or temporary labels and removable or dissolvable labels for practical use in commercial kitchens to determine gluten free foods.



#75110

'Gluten Free' food advisory labels can be used to highlight gluten free foods.



#75040



#75340

Allergy food advisory labels can be used to highlight important information on packaged foods by selecting 'Gluten Free'.

## About Fildes Food Safety

Fildes Food Safety is Australia's leading supplier of high-quality food safety products, resources, and commercial kitchen supplies. Fildes Food Safety supplies a wide range of food labels, commercial kitchen supplies and personal protective equipment to the hospitality, healthcare, and education industries.

**Browse** the range of products or **contact us** to place an order.





## PROUD AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURERS

Fildes Food Safety labels are printed onsite at our premises in Sandringham, Victoria. The entire Fildes Group is owned and operated by the Fildes family.

At a time when manufacturing in Australia continues to lose traction, we have maintained our plant here in Sandringham, where we make labels week-in week-out.

We would like to thank all our customers for your tremendous support and look forward to serving you in the future.

*-Luke Fildes*  
Managing Director

## Fildes Food Safety Pty Ltd

ABN 55 005 050 260

28-32 George Street

Sandringham, Victoria 3191

Phone: 1800 673 644 Fax: 03 9598 7949

Email: [sales@fildesfoodsafety.com.au](mailto:sales@fildesfoodsafety.com.au)

Website: [foodsafetyolutions.com.au](http://foodsafetyolutions.com.au)