



Your Gluten-Free Student

With good communication and cooperation it is possible to create a safe environment for your gluten-free students. The good news is that you are already 95% there – all the precautions that you have in place for the allergic student can be applied the gluten-free student.

What is Celiac Disease (CD)

- an inherited medical disorder where the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten
- body becomes unable to absorb nutrients: protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, which are necessary for good health
- Low iron and osteoporosis can be associated conditions

Incidence / Diagnosis Rates

- 1 in 100 North Americans
- with digestive symptoms, 1 in 56
- 1 in 10 If you have a 1° relative with CD
- CD has a 3-5% diagnosis rate, average diagnosis time is 12 years
- 97% of celiacs are never diagnosed

Symptoms Can Include

- classic - thin person, bulging stomach, diarrhea, foul smelling gas
- adults - low iron, lactose intolerance, early onset osteoporosis, pre-existing disorder
- children - symptoms more gastric, small stature, irritability, inattention, lethargy,
- migraines, often sick or sickly, dark circles under eyes
- dermatitis herpetiformis (DH) fluid filled blisters, knees, elbows, extremely itchy
- Good news – children generally make a speedier recovery than adults

What Happens When a Celiac Eats Gluten?

- vomiting & diarrhea - may need the restroom immediately / may react in 12 hours
- may need to spend extra time in the washroom
- immediate medical attention is NOT required, there is no antidote ie epi-pen
- brain fog, unable to focus, lethargy, grumpy, irritable, flu-like symptoms for a day or a week
- may need more time to complete assignments

How Much Gluten is Enough to Cause a Reaction

- 10mg - a dime is 2200mg, 1 grain in 50,000
- Health Canada ruled that 'Gluten Free' means <20 parts per million

How is Celiac Disease Different than an Allergy?

- health effects are short term and long term
- gluten triggers an autoimmune response that can lead to host of other autoimmune mediated conditions: Type 1 diabetes, Fibromyalgia, Sarcoidosis, Sjögren's Syndrome, Thyroid disease, Myasthenia gravis, Parkinsonism, Interstitial cystitis, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and more
- allergic reaction is immediate, can be treated with timely provision of antihistamines, minimal longterm effects



How is CD diagnosed?

- Specific blood tests that screens for the antibodies that celiacs make
- If blood test positive, diagnosis is confirmed with a biopsy of the small intestine, taken under pleasant sedation
- If blood test negative, and symptoms persist, biopsy should still be performed

Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity (NCGS) 6-10% population

- Newly recognized condition. All the same overt symptoms, but have negative blood work, negative biopsy.
- Treatment is the same – gluten-free diet

What to Talk About with the Parents of Your Gluten-Free Student

- establish child's precise needs - are they celiac, NCGS, Wheat allergy, lifestyle-choice
- how does child react to gluten ingestion – what to watch for
- *parents MUST be notified if suspected / confirmed / accidental or deliberate ingestion*

Scheduling

- for the year: seasonal events, holiday parties, pizza/hot dog/hamburger days, field trips with food as an activity, trips with restaurant stops, overnight trips, class birthday list
- for the week: food-oriented class activity so that parents can prepare with alternatives, educate chaperones.
- for the day: 24 hours advanced notice of special treats in the classroom so parent can prepare look-a-like options for student, make alternative meal arrangements
- ask for – and accept – help from parent

Food Protocol

- can only have foods provided or specifically approved by parents
- ask parent to provide a stash of approved treats to give in place of gluten treats
- if possible, reduce use of food as a reward in classroom

Meals / Snacks

- celiac student – wash table & hands **before** eating (keep wipes in desk)
- other students – wash table & hands **after** eating
- suggest GF place setting over table, pull table off the side, group the GF together
- monitors / supervisors / other students need to be aware of the protocol
- respect that the child- ie can't eat their lunch because it had gluten crumbs on it
- students may need access to a fridge or microwave - sandwiches not always an option

Bathroom Privileges

- may not be able to wait, may take longer
- some may be to shy task – ask them instead
- establishing a code avoids embarrassment / keeps teacher informed

Special Student Challenges

- if student is new to the diet or too young to understand the diet (K-3) , ensure that they eat only their own food
- encourage ALL students not to chew on pencils, bite nails etc.

School Materials That Contain Gluten

- avoid Crayola Play Dough, Elmer's Finger Paints, paper mache crafts, cheerios, pasta
- if wheat flour to be used, flour should be mixed outside the room if used at all
- airborne flour can hang in the air for 3-36 hours and settles on every surface
- after a gluten craft, all desks, scissors, pencils, crayons, surfaces should be thoroughly washed with soap and water
- welcome assistance - parent may offer to help out by making GF version for student or entire classroom.
- BEST PRACTICE – NO GLUTEN CRAFTS

Educational - Student / Teacher Presentation

- Cilie Yack is Under Attack, Caryn Talty
- Mommy, What is Celiac Disease?, Katie Chalmers
- NoMore Cupcakes and Tummy Aches, Jax Lowell
- Eating Gluten-Free with Emily, Bonnie Kruszka