

# Consumer health: Summer eating with celiac disease

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With summer nearly here, thoughts turn to summer eating, including potlucks, picnics at the beach and celebrations. In addition to concerns

about food safety and keeping sand out of the fruit salad, people with celiac disease need to be careful of gluten along the way. If someone with celiac disease will be at your summer table, here are a few things to keep in mind.

Celiac disease, also called celiac sprue or gluten-sensitive enteropathy, is an immune reaction to eating gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. With [celiac disease](#), eating gluten triggers an immune response in the small intestine. Over time, this reaction damages the small intestine's lining and prevents it from absorbing some nutrients. The intestinal damage often causes diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss, bloating and anemia. And it can lead to serious complications.

A [gluten-free diet](#) is essential for managing signs and symptoms of celiac disease. While most foods are naturally gluten-free, including many grains, cross-contamination is possible and gluten can hide in processed foods.

Therefore, reading labels is a must.

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