



**GLUTEN  
INTOLERANCE  
GROUP**



# Hospital Stays Made Safe

*Updated January 2020*

Being admitted to the hospital can be a stressful experience, especially for those with celiac disease or other gluten-related disorders. Whether you are there for a day-surgery or for three weeks in rehabilitation, the hospital should be doing everything it can to meet your need for a gluten-free diet. Share this information with your family and your health care providers (Dietitian, Pharmacist, Physicians) to ensure the best possible care while you are staying at the hospital.

Make certain that your family members know where this guide is located and bring it with you to your hospital stay.

Keep this guide with your list of current medications and name and address of all health care providers.

Give this guide to the nurse manager for the area of the hospital where you will be staying. Also give a copy to the pre-admission nurse to make certain that a copy is placed on the front of your chart or documented in your computerized chart. Request that it be seen easily by everyone accessing your chart.

Request a written physician's order for a gluten-free diet. Make sure that the Dr.'s Orders label you as having an "allergy" so that all personnel in the hospital will be aware of your dietary restrictions. If you are planning an admission, make an appointment to see someone in each department listed here, as applicable, (pre-op, surgery, medical/surgery, pharmacy, nutrition services-dietitian, rehabilitation, etc.) prior to your admission.

Request an allergy wristband. You may also request that "**Celiac Disease: All foods and medications must be verified gluten-free**" be printed in **BOLD** writing on your chart, at your bedside, or on the front of your door.

Ask if you may use your medication from home and if you can bring food to be stored in your room. If allowed, mark all food with your full name and room number.

If this is an emergency visit, as soon as you are settled, contact the hospital Registered Dietitian. If you are too ill to do this, have a family member or care giver who understands your gluten-free diet do this. Not all dietary staff members are necessarily familiar with this diet (Diet Technicians, Nutrition Assistants, Meal Assistants, etc.), so make sure you talk directly with the Dietitian.

Work with the Dietitian. Discuss the hospital procedures used to determine which foods are gluten-free and how they are prepared in the kitchen. Find out who is responsible for approving the "gluten-free" foods.

Bring some survival basics from home if the situation permits. Gluten-free cookies, crackers, condiments, and a box of cereal are easy to store in hospital rooms. A portable cooler or refrigerator that works on a car battery or small electrical outlet attachment can keep some items fresh and safe to eat. Mark all food with your full name and room number.

For a planned visit, inquire about available gluten-free food options. Is there a gluten-free menu, and how does meal ordering work? Ask about what procedures are in place in the kitchen to prevent cross-contact of gluten-free foods with gluten-containing items.



**GLUTEN  
INTOLERANCE  
GROUP**



## Health Care Professionals

Dear Fellow Health Care Professionals,

Your patient, \_\_\_\_\_, has celiac disease or another gluten-related disorder. The only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet and lifestyle indefinitely. This patient must eliminate all products containing wheat, rye, and barley, as well as derivatives of these grains, such as some starches and binders. The biggest concern is the diet, however these grains can also be found in medications, and rarely in oral care products. Each time a person with celiac disease consumes the prohibited protein (gluten), damage to the small intestinal villi occurs, leading to malabsorption, malnutrition and other health problems. Patients with other gluten-related disorders also experience adverse health effects when gluten is consumed.

When patients are admitted to the hospital, health is already or is about to become compromised. Celiac disease (CD) is an autoimmune disease; therefore, the person with CD is already a moderate risk patient. From the CD patient's point-of-view it is easy to be "poisoned" in a hospital...from the kitchen, pharmacy, nursing care, and any number of tests and procedures. People with CD are often fearful of hospitalization and eating away from home.

This packet has been assembled to assist you in helping to keep your patient safely gluten-free while in the hospital. There are sections attached, which can be pulled apart and given to each professional discipline working with \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you in advance for your care and concern with this person and their health while in the hospital. Should you have any questions or concerns about this patient, I encourage you to reach out to our Education Coordinator, Lola O'Rourke, at 253-258-3125 or [lola.orourke@gluten.org](mailto:lola.orourke@gluten.org). We can connect you with knowledgeable health care professionals near you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kupper, RD, CD  
CEO, Gluten Intolerance Group



**GLUTEN  
INTOLERANCE  
GROUP**



## Nursing Staff

Dear Nursing Staff,

Your patient, \_\_\_\_\_ has celiac disease or another gluten-related disorder. Celiac disease (CD) is a serious autoimmune disease (not an allergy) that requires the same meticulous attention you give to patients with medication allergies.

The only treatment for these patients is a strict gluten-free diet and lifestyle indefinitely. This person must eliminate all products containing wheat, rye, and barley; as well as any derivatives of these grains, such as certain starches and binders. Of utmost concern is the diet, however these grains can also be found in medications and oral care products. Each time a person with CD consumes these prohibited proteins (gluten), damage to the small intestinal villi occurs, leading to malabsorption, malnutrition and other health problems.

**\*Please make sure that “celiac disease” is noted visibly on the patient’s chart.**

**\*Please give the patient an allergy bracelet to wear during their stay.**

**\*Please make sure that “celiac disease/gluten-free” is noted at their bedside and/or on their door.**

It is imperative that all foods, medications and oral hygiene items to be used for this person be gluten-free. Please notify the Dietary (or Nutrition Services Department) and Pharmacy of this requirement.

Toothpaste, mouth swabs, and mouthwash must be gluten-free. Persons with Dermatitis Herpetiformis (a manifestation of celiac disease) may have a severe itchy bilateral rash if iodine is used on the skin. Dermatitis Herpetiformis is often treated with Dapsone (a sulfa drug that could cause altered liver enzymes and function).

Thank you in advance for your care and concern with this person and their health while in the hospital. Should you have any questions or concerns about this patient, I encourage you to reach out to our Education Coordinator, Lola O’Rourke, at 253-258-3125 or [lola.orourke@gluten.org](mailto:lola.orourke@gluten.org). We can connect you with knowledgeable health care professionals near you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kupper, RD, CD  
CEO, Gluten Intolerance Group



**Pharmacist and Pharmacy Staff**

Dear Pharmacist and Pharmacy Staff,

This patient, \_\_\_\_\_, has celiac disease or another gluten-related disorder. **All medications for this patient need to be checked for their gluten, gliadin, and prolamine content before being administered to the patient.** You should also ask the patient about the brand names of medications they are currently using at home. They probably have already verified these as “gluten-free.” IV’s and parenteral products are safe for use.

Gluten may be found in excipients or inert ingredients in some pharmaceutical products.

PLEASE CHECK FOR THESE POTENTIAL INGREDIENTS THAT COULD INCLUDE GLUTEN:

Starch	Pregelatinized starch
Cross linked starch	Modified food starch
Dextrimaltose	Malt, malt syrup, or malt extract
Maltodextrin	Dextrin, dextrans, cyclodextrins
Sodium starch glycolate (carboxyethyl starch)	Hydrolyzed protein
Caramel color	

At times the formulary on drugs may be changed. It is advisable to check each time the drug is dispensed. One way of avoiding this is to dispense all refills anticipated for the patient’s stay from the same bottle. Once you have verified the product is safe, dispense the extra drugs at that time. Each new bottle used to dispense a drug must be verified.

**Tips for clearing drugs:**

**Check product insert or PDR.** The data found on the package insert or PDR may be the easiest way to clear a new drug. If any of the information is “suspect” be sure to follow up with:

- **Product Manufacturer.** A list of addresses and telephone numbers may be found in the PDR and package insert. Each batch of medication made is identified by a lot number. When calling the manufacturer, be sure to ask specifically about the lot number on the bottle you are using.
- **Drug Information Centers.** Many teaching hospitals and universities have specialty information centers available to health care practitioners.
- **Source for Gluten Free Drug Information:** [www.glutenfreedrugs.com](http://www.glutenfreedrugs.com)

Be sure to verify both the active and inactive ingredients. Often it is most difficult to verify the inert ingredients in a product. Remember to report any adverse drug reactions this patient may have. We strongly encourage you to note that the patient has celiac disease when filing reports of an adverse reactions with the FDA and the manufacturer.

Thank you in advance for your care and concern with this person and their health while in the hospital. Should you have any questions or concerns about this patient, I encourage you to reach out to our Education Coordinator, Lola O’Rourke, at 253-258-3125 or [lola.ourourke@gluten.org](mailto:lola.ourourke@gluten.org). We can connect you with knowledgeable health care professionals near you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kupper, RD, CD  
CEO, Gluten Intolerance Group



**GLUTEN  
INTOLERANCE  
GROUP**



## Hospital Dietitian

Dietitian,

The patient, \_\_\_\_\_, must have a gluten-free diet.

Please review the **complete list of ingredients for all foods given to this patient**. This includes all prepared or processed foods. For all items not already in individually-wrapped containers, wrap foods in plastic wrap and mark their contents clearly. This will prevent gluten-free foods from being contaminated on the tray line or room-service prep area where gluten-containing foods are also present.

Please provide a list of acceptable “write-ins” on your patient menu selections that would be gluten-free. Fresh and canned fruits and juices, cheese, some yogurt, raw vegetables and salads (careful with the dressings) and many of the selections on a low-fat/diabetic menu may be appropriate for a gluten-free patient.

If possible, please arrange for storage of some gluten-free foods in the patient’s room that the patient has brought from home.

Please check to be sure that the diet order is marked as an “allergy” and that it is noted in the patient’s chart that he/she has celiac disease. Also, check that “gluten-free” is clearly noted on the patient’s door and at their bedside to eliminate any possible complications with their diet.

Just as an additional helpful reminder, other food intolerances for this patient are listed below:

Thank you in advance for your care and concern with this person and their health while in the hospital. Should you have any questions or concerns about this patient, I encourage you to reach out to our Education Coordinator, Lola O’Rourke, at 253-258-3125 or [lola.orourke@gluten.org](mailto:lola.orourke@gluten.org). We can connect you with knowledgeable health care professionals near you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kupper, RD, CD  
CEO, Gluten Intolerance Group  
(253) 833-6655

*A detailed diet instruction can be found at [www.gluten.org](http://www.gluten.org), under “Resources”*

## Menu Suggestions

### Clear Liquid Diet

#### Foods to Include

- Clear 100% fruit juices
- Frozen flavored ices (popsicles)
- Clear carbonated beverages
- Sugar
- Plain tea
- GF broth or bouillon
- Homemade broth
- Flavored gelatin

#### Foods to Avoid if Unable to Confirm GF status

- Flavored herbal teas with barley, malt & wheat
- Most canned broth or bouillon

### Full/Regular/General Diet

#### Foods to Include

- 100% Fruit juices
- Milk/Plain tea/Coffee
- Homemade or GF Milkshakes
- Hot cereals-Grits or Cream of Rice
- Poached or hard-boiled eggs
- Fresh, frozen or canned fruits (water or juice-packed)
- GF soups
- Plain meat, fish, poultry, canned tuna, salmon, or chicken
- Fresh potatoes or vegetables
- Rice or corn pasta
- Rice cakes and rice crackers
- Cooked cornstarch puddings
- Sorbet, frozen yogurt, ice cream, sherbet
- Sugar, salt, pepper, pure spices & herbs
- Mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard

#### Foods to Avoid if Unable to Confirm GF status

- Flavored herbal teas with barley, malt & wheat
- Some commercial energy drinks
- Cream of Wheat
- Cereals with malt or malt flavoring
- Processed fruits with a thickening agent-such as apple pie filling
- Most commercial and canned soups, broth, bouillon
- Processed meats (including sausage, luncheon meats, breaded, coated or marinated meats)
- Processed potato products and pre-seasoned vegetable mixes
- Wheat-based pasta
- Some commercial puddings
- Frozen desserts with prohibited ingredients

Enteral feeding products – nearly all are gluten-free. Consult your nutritional resource guide for product ingredients. (Don't hesitate to call the manufacturer.)

Nutritional supplements (i.e. CIB, Boost, Ensure, etc.) – check the ingredient list and call the manufacturer.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT A FOOD, CALL THE MANUFACTURER OR GIG.

This document may be reproduced for educational purposes only.

Other helpful information is available at [www.GLUTEN.org](http://www.GLUTEN.org).

Advances in celiac disease are fast-paced. If this document is more than 2 years old, please visit our website for updated documents.

This information should not be used to diagnose or treat gluten-related disorders or other medical conditions. For questions about these conditions consult your healthcare team when considering this information.

Please consider your local GIG support group as another resource.

Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG)  
31214 – 124th Ave. S.E.  
Auburn, WA 98092-3667

Phone: 253-833-6655  
Fax: 253-833-6675

[www.GLUTEN.org](http://www.GLUTEN.org)  
[customerservice@GLUTEN.org](mailto:customerservice@GLUTEN.org)

The Mission of the Gluten Intolerance Group is to empower the gluten-free community through consumer support, advocacy, and education.

To make a donation or become a volunteer to GIG, visit our website or call the office at 253-833-6655.