



ask the celiac expert

with Shelley Case, RD

Q I'm new to celiac disease. Does my whole kitchen need to be gluten-free to prevent cross-contamination?

A Following a strict gluten-free diet can be challenging whether you're away from home or in your own kitchen. While it's not necessary for everyone in the household to go on a gluten-free diet or to eliminate gluten-containing items entirely, there are a number of ways to ensure your safe food doesn't become contaminated with gluten. Here is some advice on how to store and prepare food in a gluten-aware kitchen.

STORAGE

- Keep all gluten-free products in separate containers.
- Use bright stickers to label everything that is and should remain gluten-free. Or

purchase "gluten-free" stickers from the Canadian Celiac Association's website (Celiac.ca).

- Have a separate spot in your cupboard and refrigerator for the gluten-free foods.
- Store gluten-free flours and grains in your cupboard *above* gluten-containing foods. Flour dust and bread and cracker crumbs can easily end up on or in gluten-free containers and boxes if you're not careful.
- Buy your own containers of items such as butter, peanut butter and jam. Label them "gluten-free" to prevent other household members from dipping crumby knives from toast and sandwiches into a container.
- Use squeeze bottles for condiments such as ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise.

PREPARATION

- Have your own toaster. Or, use a toaster oven, with a rack that can be removed and thoroughly washed. Another option is to buy reusable toaster bags for gluten-free bread that can be placed in a regular toaster. (You may purchase them online, such as at ElPeto.com's "store".)
- Make sure the counter area you will be using is freshly washed and free of crumbs

or flour dust. Have a separate cutting board that is only for gluten-free items.

- Thoroughly scrub pots, pans and utensils that have cooked other foods before using with gluten-free foods. It's a good idea to have a separate set of utensils and other items for gluten-free baking (e.g. wooden spoons, sifter, bread machine).
- Don't boil gluten-free pasta in the same water that cooked gluten-containing pasta. Have a separate colander to drain gluten-free pasta, as it is difficult to remove traces of pasta from a colander.
- Use separate utensils (knives, lifters, serving spoons, tongs) when preparing and serving gluten-containing and gluten-free items.

With a bit of planning and a lot of labeling, you can safely eat gluten-free alongside the rest of your family.

*Shelley Case, RD, is an international celiac nutrition expert, consulting dietitian and author of *Gluten-Free Diet: A Comprehensive Resource Guide*. See www.glutenfreediet.ca. Shelley Case is on the advisory boards of the Canadian Celiac Association, the Celiac Disease Foundation and the Gluten-Free Intolerance Group. Send your question to: editor@allergicliving.com*