



## Wheat Allergy

**W**heat allergy is primarily common in children, and is usually outgrown before reaching adulthood. Wheat allergy is sometimes confused with celiac disease, which is a digestive disorder that creates an adverse reaction to gluten. Individuals with celiac disease must avoid gluten, found in wheat, rye, barley, and sometimes oats. People who are allergic to wheat have an IgE-mediated response to wheat protein and may tolerate other grains. Symptoms of a wheat allergy reaction can range from mild to severe.

A wheat allergy can present a challenge for the diet as well as for baking, because wheat is the nation's predominant grain product. Someone on a wheat-restricted diet can eat a wide variety of foods, but the grain source must be something other than wheat. In planning a wheat-free diet, look for alternate grains such as amaranth, barley, corn, oat, quinoa, rice, rye, and tapioca. Read food labels carefully, even if you would not expect the product to contain wheat. Wheat has been found in some brands of ice cream, marinara sauce, play dough, potato chips, rice cakes, and turkey patties, and at least one brand of hot dogs.

### Baking

When baking with wheat-free flours, a combination of flours usually works best. Experiment with different blends to find one that will give you the texture you are trying to achieve.

Try substituting 1 cup wheat flour with one of the following:

- 7/8 cup rice flour
- 5/8 cup potato starch flour
- 1 cup soy flour plus 1/4 cup potato starch flour
- 1 cup corn flour

### Commonly Asked Questions

*What is the difference between celiac disease and wheat allergy?*

Celiac disease and wheat allergy are two distinct conditions. Celiac disease, or "celiac sprue," is a permanent adverse reaction to gluten. Those with celiac disease will not lose their sensitivity to this substance. This disease requires a lifelong restriction of gluten.

The major grains that contain gluten are wheat, rye, and barley. These grains and their by-products must be strictly avoided by people with celiac disease (some also avoid oat, but now gluten free oats are available).

Wheat-allergic people have an IgE-mediated response to wheat protein. These individuals must only avoid wheat. Most wheat-allergic children outgrow the allergy.

*Are kamut and spelt safe alternatives to wheat?*

No. Kamut is a cereal grain which is related to wheat. Spelt is an ancient wheat that has recently been marketed as safe for wheat-allergic individuals. This claim is untrue, however. Wheat-allergic patients can react to spelt as they do to common wheat.

### Keep in Mind

- Read labels carefully. At least one brand of hot dogs and one brand of ice cream contains wheat. It is listed on the label.
- Many country-style wreaths are decorated with wheat products.
- Some types of imitation crabmeat contain wheat.
- Wheat flour is sometimes flavored and shaped to look like beef, pork, and shrimp, especially in Asian dishes.

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