

Wheat allergy

Wheat allergy is when the body's immune system reacts to a protein in wheat. The only way to treat wheat allergy is to avoid wheat in the diet. Wheat allergy is different to Coeliac disease.

In Australia food manufacturers must state the presence of wheat in a product. Carefully check the labels of any foods that you buy for the presence of wheat in the ingredient list. Check every time, even if you have bought that product before. The ingredient lists should be used as a guide only as food products can change. Check with the manufacturer if you are not sure.

Avoid these foods:

- > baked goods (eg cakes, muffins, biscuits, donuts)
- > pancakes, puddings and other desserts
- > regular pasta and noodles
- > wheat based cereals (eg Weet-Bix, Weeties)
- > crumbed or battered foods
- > rye bread and rye crisp breads
- > coffee substitutes (eg Caro)
- > spelt bread
- > baby rusks
- > regular bread
- > ice cream cones
- > custard
- > gravy and sauces
- > prepared baby foods
- > baking powders

Avoid these ingredients:

The following label names indicate the presence of wheat.

- > wheat
- > wheat germ
- > semolina
- > flour
- > bakers flour
- > bulgar
- > triticale
- > superamine
- > wheat starch
- > wheat bran
- > cous cous
- > farina flour
- > cake flour
- > minchin
- > kamut
- > rye
- > wheat flour
- > gluten
- > durum flour
- > laubina
- > spelt
- > bal ahar
- > rye flour
- > malt and malt extract

The following ingredients are usually tolerated by children with wheat allergy:

- > modified starch
- > glucose (from wheat)
- > maltodextrin
- > dextrin
- > caramel (from wheat)
- > additives 1400 - 1450

Check these foods:

The following foods may contain wheat or may be coated in wheat.

- > potato wedges
- > hot chips
- > processed meats and sausages

Note that some cornflour is made using wheat starch, this is not suitable on a wheat free diet. Use only cornflour made using maize or cornstarch- check the label.

Gluten free products

Most gluten free products will be suitable on a wheat free diet. Always check the ingredients list carefully as there are some exceptions. If your child has other allergies you will also need to check the label for these ingredients

Eating out

If your child has a food allergy there is no reason why you should not enjoy eating out.

If your child needs emergency medication (eg an EpiPen) they should not eat out unless they have their medication with them.

Order simple dishes such as grilled meats without sauces, steamed vegetables and potato. Fresh fruit is a good option for dessert. Always check with the staff about the ingredients in the dish you want to order. If you are unsure about the ingredients in a dish do not order the food.

Cross contamination

For children highly sensitive to wheat be aware of the following sources of wheat contamination: chopping boards, toasters, bread slicers, knives, and crumbs in opened containers of butter and margarine.

Cooking without wheat

It is important to include other cereal and pasta products in your child's diet.

Try other flours

Arrowroot, buckwheat, corn or maize flour, polenta, potato flour, rice flour and soy flour are all available. Millet, sago, tapioca, buckwheat, quinoa and sorghum are also suitable to use.

Substitute

½ cup rice flour and ½ cup potato flour mixed together can be substituted into most recipes for 1 cup of regular wheat flour.

Commercial wheat free flour mixes

There are many commercial wheat free flour mixes available. Experiment with them to find one that works well for you.

Is wheat allergy life long?

Most children will grow out of their wheat allergy. As your child gets older, it is important to have regular check ups with the allergy doctor. The doctor will check if the wheat allergy is still present.

More information

- > Anaphylaxis Australia: www.allergyfacts.org.au
- > Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) website: www.allergy.org.au
- > Coeliac Society of South Australia: www.coeliacsociety.com.au/southaustralia/homepage.html

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