

# Wheat Allergy

In addition to the general information about food allergies, here are some issues that people with a wheat allergy should know about.

## Wheat allergy or celiac disease?

There are important differences between a wheat allergy and celiac disease. A wheat allergy causes a person's immune system to react abnormally to proteins found only in wheat. Celiac disease is a disorder that triggers abnormal immune reactions to the gluten found in wheat (including kamut and spelt), barley, rye, and triticale. For people with celiac disease, eating food with gluten can damage the lining of their small intestines, thus impairing their ability to absorb nutrients. This can lead to diarrhea, weight loss, malnutrition and other serious health consequences. Consult your allergist or a physician if you suspect you have a wheat allergy or celiac disease.

More information on celiac disease is available on the Health Canada website at:  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/ceciac](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/ceciac)

## Outgrowing a wheat allergy

A wheat allergy develops most commonly in infants and tends to disappear within five years. Adults who develop a wheat allergy, however, are likely to retain it. Consult your allergist before reintroducing your child to wheat products.

## Read the labels

If you're allergic to wheat, the only way to avoid a reaction is to avoid all food and products that contain wheat and wheat derivatives. Don't eat a food or product if the label has precautionary statements such as "may contain wheat". Read ingredient lists carefully and learn to identify other names for wheat, such as semolina. Do not consume a food or product if there is no ingredient list or if there is a risk they might have been in contact with wheat. If there is not enough information to make a decision, you can always call to ask the company or speak to a knowledgeable person at a restaurant.

## Exercise and wheat allergy

A rare and poorly understood condition known as food-dependent, exercise-induced anaphylaxis is most commonly linked to wheat, although other foods have also been known to trigger this condition. People with this condition can experience anaphylactic reactions when they exercise soon after eating a particular food allergen. They do not react, however, if they delay exercise by several hours.



## Sources of wheat

### Other names for wheat

Atta  
Bulgur  
Couscous  
Durum  
Einkorn  
Emmer  
Enriched, white and whole-wheat flour  
Farina  
Fu  
Graham, high-gluten and high-protein flour  
Kamut  
Seitan  
Semolina  
Spelt (dinkel, farro)  
Triticale (a cross between wheat and rye)  
Triticum aestivum  
Wheat bran, flour, germ

### Food and products that contain or often contain wheat

Breads and baked goods  
Baking mixes, powder and flour  
Beer  
Cereal-based coffee substitutes (chicory, barley)  
Chicken and beef broth (cans and bouillon cubes)  
Falafel  
Gluten  
Host (communion, altar bread and wafers)  
Hydrolyzed plant protein  
Imitation bacon  
Pie fillings and puddings  
Sauces, for example, chutney, soy and tamari sauce  
Seasonings



### Other possible sources of wheat

Deli meats, hot dogs and surimi  
Gelatinized starch, modified starch and food starch  
Ice cream  
Prepared ketchup and mustard  
Salad dressings  
Snack foods, for example, crackers, cereal

### Non-food sources of wheat

Cosmetics and hair-care products  
Medications and vitamins  
Modeling compound for example, PLAY-DOH  
Pet food  
Wreath decorations