

Looking for gluten in new ingredient lists



New labelling regulations in Canada come into effect on August 4, 2012. While manufacturers have had some time to implement the new regulations, some products may not meet all the requirements immediately. While the CONTAINS and MAY CONTAIN statements are helpful in identifying top allergens and gluten, always read the ingredient list.

The new regulations require that the ten priority allergens, gluten sources, and added sulphites of 10 ppm be identified using plain language either in the ingredient list or in a Contains statement that appears immediately after the ingredient list. Manufacturers have a choice about which method they choose to use.

When you check for gluten, you may need to check two places:

- The WARNINGS section – CONTAINS, MAY CONTAIN.
- The INGREDIENT list

Step 1

Start with the WARNINGS. You are looking for wheat, rye, barley, oats or gluten.

If you see wheat, rye, barley, oats or gluten, in either the CONTAINS or MAY CONTAIN list, the product is NOT OK.

If there is a CONTAINS statement, and it does not include wheat or a gluten grain, the ingredients are acceptable for a gluten-free diet.

If the ingredient list just says oats, assume they are contaminated with gluten, unless they are specifically identified as pure uncontaminated oats or by the source (Cream Hill Estates Oats, Only Oats, etc.).

Step 2

If there is no CONTAINS statement, check the INGREDIENT list. You are looking for wheat, rye, barley or oats. If you see wheat, rye, barley, or oats, the product is NOT OK. If you do not see any gluten source listed, the ingredients are acceptable for a gluten-free diet.



Notes

Plain names must be used for all allergens - WHEAT, MILK, EGGS, etc. Allergens cannot be hidden in ingredients like seasoning or natural flavour.

If one allergen is listed in a CONTAINS statement, then all the allergens including gluten must be listed.

The only warnings that have official meanings are CONTAINS and MAY CONTAIN. All other warnings (“made in a plant that also processes wheat “etc.”) can only be understood by contacting the company.

Cross-contamination with gluten can occur in a product despite the use of good manufacturing practices and may not be reflected on the ingredient list.

Example A: Tomato Soup

INGREDIENTS: WATER, TOMATO PASTE, GLUCOSE-FRUCTOSE, WHEAT FLOUR, SALT, YEAST EXTRACT, SEA SALT, SPICES, CITRIC ACID.

There is no CONTAINS statement, so you need to look at the ingredients. This product contains wheat flour and is not acceptable for a gluten-free diet.

Example B: Cream of Tomato Soup

INGREDIENTS: TOMATO PUREE, FILTERED WATER, CREAM, EVAPORATED CARROT JUICE, ONIONS, SEA SALT, BLACK PEPPER.
CONTAINS: MILK

There is a CONTAINS statement which must list all the allergens and gluten in the product since it appears below the ingredient list. The only allergen in the CONTAINS statement is milk, so the product is acceptable for a gluten-free diet.

Example C: Tomato Vegetable Soup

INGREDIENTS: DRIED VEGETABLES (TOMATOES, ONION, CARROTS, CELERY ROOT, GREEN BEANS, GREEN BELL PEPPERS, GARLIC), RICE, CORN STARCH, MSG, SALT, BEEF FAT, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, NATURAL COLOUR, POTASSIUM CHLORIDE, DISODIUM GUANYLATE, DISODIUM INOSINATE, DRIED PARSLEY, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOUR, SILICON DIOXIDE, SPICE, SULFITE. **MAY CONTAIN MILK INGREDIENTS.**

There is a MAY CONTAIN warning, but no CONTAINS statement, so you must read all of the ingredients to check for gluten. When you look at the ingredient list, there are no gluten-containing ingredients listed, so the product is acceptable for a gluten-free diet.

Still have questions? Contact the Canadian Celiac Association: www.celiac.ca or askthecca@celiac.ca

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