



Dear Cafeteria Staff,

A student in your school has been diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder called celiac disease. While this will affect some aspects of school management, including food preparation, patience and understanding can bring about the necessary changes that will quickly become a natural part of the school experience for all involved.

What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease (CD) is an autoimmune disease that mainly affects the gastrointestinal tract. Individuals who have CD are permanently intolerant to gluten, a group of proteins found in wheat, rye, barley and contaminated oats. Gluten is toxic to those with CD. In a person with undiagnosed or untreated CD, the finger-like ridges that line the walls of the small intestine known as villi become flattened and unable to absorb nutrients properly. CD may also affect other organ systems.

How will this affect your job?

Even the tiniest amount of wheat, rye, barley or contaminated oats is toxic to a person with CD, and this can make food preparation, especially in a commercial-type kitchen, a challenge. It is not impossible, however, and by learning these simple ABC's you will be able to provide safe and enjoyable meals for the student with CD.

Always offer foods that are free of wheat, rye, barley and contaminated oats.

Be aware of hidden wheat, rye, barley and contaminated oats in processed foods.

Clean utensils and work surfaces are necessary.

A kitchen prep sheet with more information on this is available for your convenience. Contact the parent/guardian or the National Celiac Association if you have questions or concerns

The information contained in this material is not intended to be all-inclusive. It is provided to help you understand the importance of caution and preparation when working with a person with CD.

The goal is to provide an environment where the child with CD can learn self-management skills without being consumed by the illness. An atmosphere designed to foster responsible decision making will ultimately help the child perform well both in and out of the classroom.

Thank you for your help and support.

Sincerely,