1

I Have to Eat Gluten-Free. Now What?

If you bought this book, it is likely that you, a family member, or a friend has celiac disease, dermatitis herpetiformis, or non-celiac gluten sensitivity. You may not be familiar with all three of these conditions, so here is a quick overview.

Celiac disease is a genetically based autoimmune disease. If you have it, you cannot eat a type of protein (called gluten) that is found in the grains wheat, barley, and rye. If you do, the protein in these grains triggers an immune system response that causes damage to the lining of the small intestine.

Specifically, the lining of the small intestine contains hairlike projections called villi that help you digest food and absorb its nutrients. In untreated celiac disease, the villi become shortened or completely flattened, which prevents food from being properly absorbed. Malabsorption of food may cause a variety of gastrointestinal symptoms—for example, diarrhea, gas, and stomach pain—as well as conditions such as bone disease and anemia. Currently, the only available treatment for celiac disease is a lifelong gluten-free diet.

Dermatitis herpetiformis is a type of celiac disease that involves the skin. If you have dermatitis herpetiformis, you most likely experienced damage to the lining of your small intestine before you were diagnosed

and treated. In addition, you develop a severely itchy skin rash when you eat gluten. As with celiac disease, the treatment for dermatitis herpetiformis includes lifelong adherence to a gluten-free diet.

Non-celiac gluten sensitivity is currently thought to be an immune system response to gluten. It is not considered an autoimmune disease like celiac disease, however, or a food allergy such as a wheat allergy. Nonetheless, eating gluten may result in some of the same symptoms that are experienced by a person with celiac disease. As with celiac disease, the current treatment for non-celiac gluten sensitivity is a gluten-free diet.

For a more complete discussion about the differences between celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity, please see www.diet.com/dietblogs/read_blog.php?title=Celiac+Disease+vs.+Gluten+Sensitivity&blid=11838.

Even if you "know" you have a problem with gluten, do yourself a favor and get tested for celiac disease *before* starting a gluten-free diet. If you start eating gluten-free before being tested, your test results may not be accurate. The first step is getting a simple blood test that can be ordered by your physician.

How Do I Know What Foods I Can Eat?

Following a gluten-free diet may seem overwhelming and confusing at first, but, rest assured, you won't feel this way for long—we promise! In this chapter, you will learn which foods and ingredients are gluten-free and which are not. In the past, finding gluten-free foods was a fairly daunting and time-consuming task. Thanks in large part to the Food and Drug Administration's Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) and proposed new rules regarding the labeling of foods as gluten-free, it has become far less stressful to determine whether a particular food or ingredient is gluten-free. You will learn how to read food labels later in this chapter.

When cooking gluten-free, you must avoid using all varieties and most forms of the grains wheat, barley, and rye, as well as cross-bred varieties of these grains, such as triticale (a cross between wheat and rye), and ingredients made from these grains.

You may come across information, even from health-food store employees, indicating that certain varieties of wheat, such as spelt, are safe for people with celiac disease to eat. This is not true. You must avoid all varieties of wheat, including (but not limited to) durum wheat (which is used to make semolina), common wheat, einkorn wheat, emmer wheat, kamut, and spelt wheat. They all are closely related; they contain gluten and amino acid sequences that are harmful to people with celiac disease.

Although oats themselves do not contain gluten, they must not be eaten unless they are labeled "gluten-free." Oats without the label may contain small amounts of wheat, barley, or rye picked up from the fields where they were grown, the railcars in which they were transported, or the manufacturing plant where they were processed. Note: If you would like to add oats to your gluten-free diet, the American Dietetic Association recommends that this be done under the supervision of your physician or registered dietitian.

The good news is, gluten-free doesn't mean grain-free. When you prepare gluten-free meals, you have a wide variety of tasty gluten-free grains to choose from, many of which will be discussed in this book. These include rice, corn, gluten-free oats, millet, teff, sorghum, wild rice, buckwheat, amaranth, and quinoa. These grains are full of all kinds of wonderful nutrients, such as fiber, iron, and B vitamins. Although you may not be familiar with all of the grains now, by the time you finish reading this book you will have learned how to shop for them, prepare them, and incorporate at least some (and hopefully all) of them into your meals.

Reading Food Labels

When you start following a gluten-free diet, one of the first habits you should form is reading food labels, every time you shop. With very few exceptions, when determining whether a food is made with gluten-containing ingredients you are looking for five words on the food label: wheat, barley, rye, oats (unless gluten-free), and malt (unless the label says otherwise malt is made from barley). In general, if you see any of these words on a food label, the food is not gluten-free.

In addition to these five ingredients, you will need to look out for a few other ingredients, such as modified food starch and dextrin, that may be made from starch or starch hydrolysates (starches that have been partially broken down). It is possible that these ingredients contain gluten because wheat may have been used as the source of starch, and trace amounts of protein may remain in the starch. Nonetheless, if wheat protein is present in either of these ingredients, the word "wheat" will be included on the label of any packaged food regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If you see the words "modified food starch" or "dextrin" in an ingredients list of an FDA-regulated food, and neither the ingredients list nor the "Contains" statement includes the word "wheat," then that food does not contain wheat protein. If, however, you see "modified food starch" or "dextrin" on the label of a food product regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the source of the ingredient is not named, these ingredients may contain protein from wheat.

Both FDA- and USDA-regulated foods may also contain brewer's yeast. Brewer's yeast that is used in food as a flavoring may be a by-product of the beer-brewing process and, as such, may be contaminated with malt and grain. At this time, it is recommended that you avoid food products that contain brewer's yeast. See the next two sections for a more thorough explanation of FDA- and USDA-regulated foods.

Note: Although the ingredients maltodextrin, glucose syrup, and caramel color may also be derived from wheat starch hydrolysates, these ingredients are unlikely to contain significant (or any) amounts of gluten protein. In fact, because wheat starch–based maltodextrin and wheat starch–based glucose syrup contain such small amounts of protein, they have been permanently exempted from allergen labeling in the European Union.

FDA-Regulated Foods

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), which took effect on January 1, 2006, has taken much of the stress out of determining whether a particular food or ingredient is free from gluten-containing ingredients. Under this act, if ingredients in a packaged food regulated by the FDA contain wheat protein, then the word

"wheat" must be included on the food label, either in the ingredients list or in a separate "Contains" statement. This statement is usually found immediately after the ingredients list.

In addition to wheat, FALCPA applies to seven other major allergens, namely, milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, and soybeans. The FDA regulates all foods with the exception of meat products, poultry products, and egg products. If you are reading the label of a food product regulated by the FDA and do not see the word "wheat," you can be assured that the ingredients in the food do not inherently contain wheat protein.

USDA-Regulated Foods

The United States Department of Agriculture regulates meat products, poultry products, and egg products (meaning any dried, frozen, or liquid eggs, with or without added ingredients), which includes any mixed food products that contain more than 3 percent raw meat, at least 2 percent cooked meat, or at least 2 percent cooked poultry. Products regulated by the USDA that may contain gluten include lunch meats, hot dogs, canned meats, and prepackaged seasoned "fresh" chicken products. As of this writing, the USDA did not have a mandatory allergen rule in place, although it may develop one in the future. Nonetheless, the USDA strongly encourages manufacturers to voluntarily label the eight major allergens as described in FALCPA. Even though allergen labeling is voluntary, the USDA believes it has widespread compliance among its manufacturers. Chances are good that if you do not see the word "wheat" on a USDA-regulated product, none of the ingredients that are used to make the product contain wheat protein.

The USDA does require all ingredients in a USDA-regulated food product to be listed on the food label by their "common or usual name." Unfortunately, the common or usual name of an ingredient does not always indicate the source of the ingredient. Examples of common or usual names that can mystify a consumer include "dextrin" and "modified food starch." You may come across these ingredients in any number of products, such as lunch meats, canned chicken products, hot dogs, and sausages. There also are several common or usual names for wheat-based flour that may be used on a food label,

including semolina, farina, durum flour, enriched flour, graham flour, white flour, and plain flour.

Perhaps voluntary labeling is not quite good enough for you, and you would rather be absolutely certain that a USDA-regulated product is free of ingredients that contain wheat protein. If you see "modified food starch" or "dextrin" on the label of a product that otherwise appears to be free of gluten-containing ingredients, contact the manufacturer and ask about the source of its modified food starch or dextrin. Chances are good that the source will be corn.

For an in-depth interview with the USDA on its policies related to allergen labeling, please see www.diet.com/dietblogs/read_blog.php?title=Labeling+of+USDA-Regulated+Foods&blid=17330&sh=1.

Should I Be Concerned about Caramel Color?

In both FDA- and USDA-regulated products, caramel may be made from malt (in addition to starch hydrolysates). You probably shouldn't worry too much about this ingredient, though. Caramel is usually made from corn starch, and even if it is made from malt, it probably won't contain much, if any, gluten protein because it is so highly processed.

For more information on caramel color, see www.diet.com/dietblogs/read_blog.php?title=Caramel+Color&blid=17069.

Do I Need to Watch for Natural Flavors?

In FDA-regulated food products, natural flavor could be derived from barley or rye (a natural flavoring could also be made from wheat, but if it does contain protein from wheat, this will be declared on the food label). If the flavoring is barley-based, it most likely is called some form of malt in the ingredients list. If the flavoring is made from rye, it is probably listed as "rye flavoring" in the ingredients. In addition, rye flavoring tends to be used in products that you wouldn't be eating anyway, such as bread. If natural flavor is the only suspect ingredient in an FDA-regulated food product, the food is in all likelihood fine for you to eat.

In USDA-regulated foods, ingredients that contain protein cannot be included under "natural flavor" but instead must be listed by their common or usual name on the food label. In other words, if you see

"natural flavor" in the ingredients list of a USDA-regulated product, it does not contain undeclared protein, such as from wheat, barley, or rye.

How about Ingredients That May Contain Barley?

A few ingredients, such as brown rice syrup and smoke flavoring, may occasionally contain barley protein. Some brown rice syrups may use a form of barley, such as barley enzymes, during processing. It is unclear whether these enzymes might contain small amounts of barley gluten. If you are concerned about this ingredient, please choose only rice syrups and products containing rice syrup that are labeled gluten-free. Some (but certainly not all or even most) dry smoke flavorings use malted barley flour as a carrier for the smoke flavor. If this flavoring is used in a poultry or meat product and it contains barley protein, barley will be listed in the ingredients by its common or usual name. It will not be "hidden" under the term "smoke flavoring." If this ingredient is used in an FDA-regulated food, such as salsa, sub-ingredients may or may not be included. If you are concerned about this ingredient, please contact the manufacturer and ask whether the smoke flavoring used in its product contains barley.

For more information on barley enzymes, see www.diet.com/dietblogs/read_blog.php?title=Barley+Enzymes+In+Gluten-Free+Products&blid=15895.

The Bottom Line on Reading Food Labels

When reading the labels of FDA-regulated foods (which will be on most of the food you purchase), you are looking primarily for wheat, barley, rye, oats (unless it's labeled gluten-free), and malt. At this time, you should also watch out for brewer's yeast.

On the labels of USDA-regulated foods—that is, meat products, poultry products, and egg products—you mainly need to check for wheat, barley, rye, oats (unless it's labeled gluten-free), malt, dextrin (unless a gluten-free source is named), and modified food starch (unless a gluten-free source is specified). At this time, you also need to be alert for brewer's yeast. Finally, familiarize yourself with words

that mean "wheat" if they are used on the label of a USDA-regulated food; some examples include "durum flour," "enriched flour," "farina," "graham flour," "plain flour," "semolina," and "white flour."

Reading Alcohol Labels

The labeling of wines, distilled spirits, and malt beverages falls under the jurisdiction of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Trade Bureau (TTB). This agency is currently in the process of developing rules similar to FALCPA for the mandatory labeling of major food allergens used in the production of alcoholic beverages. These rules will apply to fining agents (which are used in wine making to remove substances that may cause wine to look cloudy) and to processing agents as well. Currently, producers of wines, distilled spirits, and malt beverages may voluntarily choose to declare the presence of the eight major allergens, including wheat, on product labels as described in FALCPA.

Certain types of alcohol are off limits to people with celiac disease. These include malt beverages, such as beer, porter, stout, and pilsner, which by definition contain malted barley with hops. Although most beers are considered malt beverages, gluten-free beers are not, because they are made using a substitute for malted barley. As a result, gluten-free beers are regulated by the FDA and not by the TTB.

Wine and pure distilled spirits, such as vodka, whisky, gin, brandy, rum, and tequila, are considered gluten-free. Certain classes of wines and distilled spirits may contain added colorings and flavorings. Brandy, rum, tequila, and whisky may be colored with caramel. Cordials and liqueurs may have flavorings and colorings added after distillation. Depending on the type of alcohol, colorings and flavorings may or may not have to be declared on the alcohol label. You probably shouldn't concern yourself with either caramel color or flavoring, though. As stated previously, caramel may be made from wheat starch hydrolysates or barley malt but is most likely made from corn. Even if caramel is made from wheat or barley, it is unlikely to contain much, if any, gluten. A flavoring agent used in a cordial or liqueur probably

won't be derived from wheat, barley, or rye. If you have any concerns, contact the manufacturer.

For more information on the allergen labeling of alcoholic beverages, see http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/06-6467.pdf.

What Is Gluten-Free Labeling?

As of this writing, the FDA had not yet released its final rule on the definition of "gluten-free" for the purposes of food labeling. When this rule is released it will be the first time the United States has had a government definition of the term "gluten-free." Unlike allergen labeling, this rule will most likely apply to foods regulated by both the FDA and the USDA. At this time, the USDA does not plan to make its own rules for gluten-free labeling and instead plans to adopt the FDA's ruling. Some facets of the rule may change when it is finalized, but under the FDA's current proposal, a "gluten-free" food label will mean:

1. The food does not contain a prohibited grain, namely, wheat (which includes all varieties, such as common wheat, durum wheat, einkorn wheat, emmer wheat, kamut, and spelt wheat), barley, rye, or cross-bred varieties of these grains, such as triticale.
2. The food does not contain an ingredient made from a prohibited grain that has not been processed to remove gluten. Examples include hydrolyzed wheat protein, wheat bran, wheat germ, barley malt extract or flavoring, and malt vinegar. In other words, hydrolyzed wheat protein is derived from wheat, and the processing of this ingredient has not resulted in gluten being removed.
3. The food does not contain an ingredient made from a prohibited grain that has been processed to remove gluten but whose use in the food results in the food containing 20 or more parts per million of gluten. Ingredients that may be used in a product labeled gluten-free (depending upon how much gluten they contain) include modified food starch and wheat starch. In other words, wheat starch is derived from wheat and the processing of this ingredient has resulted in much of the gluten being removed. Yet the gluten content of wheat starch varies greatly. For wheat starch

to be used in a product labeled gluten-free, the final food product must not contain 20 or more parts per million of gluten.

4. The food contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten.

Now I Really Have a Lot of Questions!

The proposed definition of "gluten-free" for labeling purposes may raise additional questions in your mind, some of which we hope to address here. (The answers we've provided are based on the proposed rule and may therefore change once the rule is finalized.)

Do all foods that happen to be gluten-free need to have a "gluten-free" label?

No. The labeling of a food product as gluten-free is voluntary. If a food does not carry a gluten-free label, it does not mean the food contains gluten. In fact, foods that are inherently gluten-free, such as plain milk and honey, cannot include a gluten-free claim on the food label unless it is made clear that all milk (or honey) is gluten-free. For example, the label could say, "Milk, a gluten-free food" or "All milk is gluten-free."

Can oats carry a "gluten-free" label?

Yes. Although oats are considered naturally gluten-free, they are frequently contaminated with wheat, barley, or rye. For this reason, oats may be labeled gluten-free if they contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten. Unlike for other naturally gluten-free foods, however, packagers of oats cannot state on their label that "All oats are gluten-free" or that "Oats are a gluten-free food."

What does "20 parts per million of gluten" mean?

This is a proportional measure of how many milligrams of gluten are in a kilogram of food. There are 1 million milligrams in a kilogram, so 20 parts per million of gluten means that 20 milligrams out of 1 million milligrams of food contain gluten. In other words, if you had a giant bag of M&Ms that was supposed to contain 1 million red candies, but out of that 1 million candies, 20 were blue instead of red,

you could say that your bag of red M&Ms was contaminated with 20 parts per million of blue M&Ms.

Why did the FDA choose 20 parts per million as the cut-off point for gluten-free labeling?
At the time the proposal was written, 20 parts per million was the level at which the Food and Drug Administration believed gluten could be reliably and consistently detected using currently available tests.

Is 20 parts per million of gluten a safe amount?
Although it is best to strive to consume as little gluten as possible, 20 parts per million is considered a very small amount. Recent studies on the daily amount of gluten that can be safely consumed by a person with celiac disease indicate that 10 milligrams of gluten is a safe amount. If you were to eat a 1-ounce serving of a bread product containing 20 parts per million of gluten, you would take in about 0.57 milligrams of gluten. At this ratio, you would have to eat 17½ 1-ounce slices of bread (or the equivalent) to reach a total intake of 10 milligrams of gluten.

Why doesn't "gluten-free" mean zero gluten?
It is currently impossible to test a food down to zero gluten, so a zero gluten level would be unenforceable. Also, manufacturers would be unlikely to guarantee that their products contain zero gluten because even in the most controlled environment, the possibility of some contamination exists as a food makes its way from the field where it is grown to the plant where it is processed.

If a food is labeled "gluten-free," does this apply to gluten that may be in a product due to cross-contamination?
Yes, if a food is labeled "gluten free," the product contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten, regardless of whether the gluten is found in the ingredients or is in the food unintentionally through cross-contact. This differs from the FALCPA's guidelines, which address only ingredients and do not apply to substances that may be in a product unintentionally due to cross-contact. In other words, if you pick up a

container of oatmeal, the only listed ingredient is rolled oats. If the product is labeled gluten-free, you know that this particular brand of oats contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten from contamination with wheat, barley, or rye. If you pick up another container of oats that is not labeled gluten-free, you have no way of knowing how much wheat, barley, or rye may be in the product unintentionally through cross-contact.

How do manufacturers of gluten-free foods ensure that their products contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten?

There are several steps manufacturers may take to produce gluten-free foods. These steps include using a dedicated gluten-free facility, room, or line or following standards of good manufacturing practice; having an allergen control program; testing of "raw" ingredients for gluten; in-house testing of their finished products; and periodically sending samples of the final food products to third-party laboratories for gluten testing. If you want more information regarding specific steps a food company is taking to ensure that its gluten-free products contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten, contact the company and ask to speak with a quality assurance representative.

Why are wheat starch and modified food starch considered ingredients that have been processed to remove gluten?

The processing of these ingredients removes most protein, leaving primarily carbohydrates. Yet some amount of protein does remain in the starch. Not all wheat starch is processed the same, and, depending on quality, various wheat starches will vary in the amount of gluten they contain. If wheat starch or wheat-based modified food starch is used as an ingredient in a gluten-free food, the final food product (as sold to the consumer) must contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten. If you come across a product that contains wheat starch, and the food is not labeled gluten-free, do not eat this product. If a food product contains modified food starch and the label includes the word "wheat" and the product is not marked gluten-free, do not eat this food. On the other hand, if a food label includes the word "wheat" and the product is labeled "gluten-free," the product contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten.

Must all ingredients used in a food product that's labeled gluten-free contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten?
No, the "less than 20 parts per million of gluten" threshold refers to the finished food product and not to individual ingredients.

Can any ingredients be used in a food product that is labeled gluten-free as long as the final food product contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten?
No, based on the FDA's proposed definition of "gluten-free," certain ingredients cannot be used in products labeled gluten-free. These ingredients include the grains wheat, barley, rye, and their cross-bred varieties. In addition, ingredients derived from these grains that have not been processed to remove gluten, such as hydrolyzed wheat protein and barley malt extract, may not be used in a food product labeled "gluten-free," regardless of how much gluten the final food product contains (even if the product contains less than 20 parts per million of gluten).

Might a food be labeled "gluten-free" and also contain wheat protein?
Yes. Under FALCPA, if any wheat protein is present in an ingredient, the word "wheat" must be included on the food label. Yet the amount of wheat protein in the product may be so low that the product may still be considered gluten-free under the proposed FDA rule. If you want to avoid gluten-free foods that contain wheat protein, just look for the word "wheat" in the ingredients list and the "Contains" statement of a gluten-free food. If you don't see the word "wheat," ingredients in the gluten-free food do not contain wheat protein.

What about voluntary allergen advisory statements on food labels?
Another statement you may see on food labels is voluntary allergen advisory labeling related to the manufacturing process. Examples include "made in a facility that also manufactures products containing soy and gluten" and "produced in a facility that uses wheat, milk, soy, almonds, pecans, and hazelnuts." Keep in mind that this statement is

voluntary, and, unlike gluten-free labeling, which also is voluntary, there are currently no federal guidelines (proposed or otherwise) pertaining to the use of allergen advisory statements on food labels. Manufacturers who include this information on their labels are providing you with more information than is required by law. Just because you don't see precautionary statements on other foods doesn't mean that they, too, are not manufactured in similar environments. Also, if you see this statement on a product, this does not necessarily mean it is contaminated. If this type of wording appears on a product that's labeled gluten-free, remember that under the proposed rule the food by definition must contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten, regardless of the manufacturing process.

Both gluten-free labeling and allergen advisory statements are voluntary. If, however, a manufacturer chooses to label food products gluten-free, there are federal guidelines that must be followed once the rule is finalized. No such guidelines exist for allergen advisory statements. Also, remember that allergen advisory statements are different from the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act.

It is important to understand that all manufacturers should follow current good manufacturing practices. This means they should take steps to reduce or eliminate the chance of an allergen unintentionally finding its way into a food that does not contain that allergen as an ingredient. Steps that manufacturers may take include thorough cleaning of equipment between product runs and timed product turnovers—meaning that the first batch of a product, which is most likely to contain residual material from the last product, is not packaged for the consumer.

On food labels, you may also notice statements such as, "Made in a dedicated nut- and gluten-free bakery." If given the choice, most people who must follow a gluten-free diet would probably choose to eat foods that were manufactured in dedicated facilities or at least on production lines dedicated to gluten-free foods. Yet this is not possible for many mainstream foods or even for some specially manufactured gluten-free foods. If you would like to learn more about how particular foods are manufactured, check the company Web site or contact a quality assurance representative and talk with him or her about the company's allergen control program.

How Do I Avoid Cross-Contamination in the Kitchen and at the Table?

When you or someone in your household is following a gluten-free diet, it's important to prevent the contamination of gluten-free foods with gluten-containing ones. When contamination occurs, it is generally referred to as cross-contamination or cross-contact. If you are old enough, you remember a certain advertisement for Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. This ad illustrates cross-contact and why it's something you definitely want to avoid with gluten (although, in the case of the commercial, it was a happy accident and not something to be feared). In the ad, two people are sitting side by side. One is munching on a chocolate bar, while the other is eating peanut butter. They both end up accusing the other of getting "peanut butter on my chocolate" and "chocolate in my peanut butter." You probably get the point!

Concern over cross-contact does not necessarily mean that everyone in your family needs to follow a gluten-free diet, but all family members must take seriously the need to prevent cross-contact. The following recommendations should help you reduce the potential for cross-contact in your home:

- Designate certain cupboards or sections of your pantry as gluten-free. Have you ever noticed the flour and crumbs that accumulate in your cupboards? You want to keep separate all gluten-containing and gluten-free foods that make crumbs or "dust" to avoid cross-contamination. This includes flours, grains, mixes, pastas, breads, cookies, crackers, and so on. If you don't have the space in your kitchen to do this, designate certain shelves, preferably higher shelves, as gluten-free so that gluten-containing crumbs cannot fall down onto the gluten-free shelf.
- Insist on a "no-double-dipping" rule for shared foods that are spread on bread products. This includes butter, peanut butter, mayonnaise, mustard, jelly, and so on. It's amazing how many gluten-containing bread crumbs can end up in jelly or on butter when this rule is not used.
- Always use separate serving utensils for gluten-free and gluten-containing foods or, alternatively, serve the gluten-free food first.

For example, if you have only one ice cream scoop, serve the gluten-free ice cream first.

- Make sure that serving utensils stay where they are supposed to. You don't want the spoon that's used to dish up gluten-containing macaroni and cheese to also serve up the gluten-free maple-glazed carrots. And remind family members not to use their personal utensils as serving utensils. This is a common courtesy, after all.
- Cook completely gluten-free meals whenever possible. This is the easiest way to prevent cross-contact. It's especially important when you are having guests who might not understand the importance of not mixing up serving utensils. For occasions when this is not feasible, plate the food yourself in the kitchen. Try to avoid serving home-style at the table.
- If your meal involves both gluten-containing and gluten-free components, either prepare the gluten-free portion first or use separate kitchen tools for the gluten-free food. For example, if you are making a pasta dish, and not everyone in your family is a fan of gluten-free pasta, you might find yourself cooking two types of noodles. Ideally, it's best to have two sets of pasta tongs and two strainers; however, this might not be practical in your household. At a minimum, you must make sure to stir the different pastas with separate utensils. If you have only one strainer and one set of tongs, it is imperative that you strain the gluten-free pasta first and use the tongs to serve the gluten-free pasta first.
- Don't bake gluten-free and gluten-containing foods at the same time. If you have to bake both types of food on the same day, prepare the gluten-free foods first. There is too great a potential for leftover wheat flour to find its way into your gluten-free baked goods. It is far better for the gluten-free flours to make their way into the wheat flour.
- Invest in a toaster oven, if possible. It is much easier to clean than a toaster. If you do have a toaster, purchase some toaster bags for your gluten-free breads, or, if you can, buy two toasters and designate one as gluten-free. You can order toaster bags from www.celinalfoods.com. They are also convenient to use at work, at school, and while traveling. By using toaster bags, you will

prevent errant wheat-bread crumbs from finding their way onto the gluten-free bread.

- When microwaving, always place food on its own separate plate or on top of a paper towel. If you use splatter covers, designate one for gluten-free food or make sure it is thoroughly cleaned between uses. Also, be sure to keep the entire microwave oven clean. You don't want crumbs from prior meals to contaminate the gluten-free food.