



## Producing Gluten-Free Products in a Non-dedicated Kitchen

GIG Education  
Bulletin

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### **What is Gluten and a Gluten-Free Diet?**

Gluten adds elasticity, volume and a nice texture to products. Gluten is a common name for proteins found in all grains. Gluten is found in wheat, rye, barley and all forms of these grains or hybrids of these grains. Gluten causes damage to the intestines of persons with gluten sensitivities and must be avoided. The only treatment is a strict gluten-free (GF) diet for the rest of their life.

### **Cross-Contamination.**

People following a gluten-free lifestyle have two primary concerns: 1) elimination of prohibited grains and 2) cross-contamination of gluten-free foods. Cross-contamination is a major problem in the food industry, especially in non-dedicated milling and baking facilities. Very small amounts of gluten (more than 20 parts per million) are potentially dangerous to persons on a GF diet. Flour dust in the air, shared equipment with dust particles, use of common utensils and baking equipment, and inadequate cleaning and scheduling of GF vs. gluten-production are major causes of cross-contamination of gluten-free products.

### **Baking gluten-free in a non-dedicated facility.**

It is possible to safely produce gluten-free products in a non-dedicated facility, but policies and procedures must be in place to prevent cross-contamination. These steps and considerations will be helpful for your establishment to produce safe GF products:

#### **1. Ingredient handling:**

If there is a common facility for GF and gluten-containing ingredients:

- a) separate storage and preparation/staging areas for allergen and non-allergen ingredients.
- b) separate equipment that is clearly marked and used for allergen and non-allergen products. This includes measuring tools, mixing bowls, pans, utensils, etc.
- c) policies for all employees to have clean garments and hands when handling GF products. This would include a policy about foods and beverages not being allowed in the production area; changing into clean lab coats, aprons, and gloves for GF production.

#### **2. The facility and equipment:**

Best practices for the facility and equipment would be to have separate production areas and equipment that has controlled air-flow between the two production areas and the equipment be dedicated in each area for use on GF or non-gluten-free production. This practice minimizes the potential for air-borne dust contamination.

When this is not possible, you must consider the high risk of cross contamination from air-borne dust and shared equipment with residual dust and flour that is not able to be easily removed with normal cleaning.

***Dangerous grains:  
Wheat, spelt,  
emmer, faro,  
triticale, rye, barley,  
kamut***

***Fact: Flour dust may  
stay air-borne for 24  
hours after you stop  
using it.***

## **Reducing cross-contamination**

**1. Use wet cleaning systems.** Use of wet-wash cleaning systems is the best way to remove gluten from equipment and utensils used in gluten-free production. As much as possible, shared equipment should be broken down before GF production and cleaned using commercial cleaning products and commercial dishwashing systems. When shared equipment cannot be cleaned using a wet-wash system, there is risk of cross-contamination.

**2. Schedule GF production no less than 24 hours or more after the last gluten-containing production has been completed (including packaging).** Give air-borne flour dust adequate time to settle to the ground by scheduling GF production at the beginning of the day, after no production has occurred for 24 hours. Scheduling GF production on Monday mornings after a thorough wipedown has been done and no baking has occurred over the weekend is ideal. Be sure to observe any dust on the equipment and wipe it down and clean utensils that have been exposed to the air before starting production. To be sure, consider doing swab testing of the equipment before production of GF products.

## **3. Storage of all GF ingredients and products in sealed, well-marked containers.**

To avoid cross contamination all GF ingredients should have a designated storage area and containers, designated prep area and packaging area. These areas should be washed down before use for GF production. All GF products must be stored in closed containers and packages to prevent cross-contamination.

## **Labeling - The Law**

All goods, not consumed on the premises, are required to meet the labeling laws set by the FDA, including ingredient listings, allergy and nutritional information and company information.

## **Allergy Labeling**

As of January 2006, the top common eight allergens must be labeled on products. These include: wheat, eggs, soy, dairy, tree nuts, peanuts, shell fish and finned fish. Labels must list the allergen using common language either immediately after the ingredient [Example: Milk, semolina (wheat), eggs, salt....] or at the end of the ingredient list starting with the word 'Contains'. [Example: Contains wheat, eggs, milk.] This is the required allergen labeling format by the FDA.

## **GF Labeling**

GF labeling is currently being defined by the FDA. Labeling GF is voluntary, however once the final ruling is in place, all products carrying a gluten-free label claim must meet the definition set by the FDA. At this time that includes:

1. No prohibited grain or protein from those grains. Prohibitive grains are defined as wheat, rye, barley and any of the species related to these grains or hybrids of these grains.
2. No product or ingredient made from or rendered from the prohibited grains that contains more than 20 ppm gluten
3. No more than 20 ppm gluten

## **Voluntary Labeling Statements**

Voluntary label statements are not regulated by the FALCPA Allergen law, however they may not be used in place of required allergen labeling.

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*This information should not be used to diagnose or treat celiac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis. See your health care team for diagnosis and treatment options specifically for you.*

## **Visit your local GIG Branch:**

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*GIG is a nonprofit 501c3 national organization providing support for per persons with gluten intolerances, in order to live health, productive lives. GIG Branches provide support at a local level.*

*To make a donation or become a volunteer to GIG, visit our Web site or call the office at 253-833-6655.*