



How to Know Which Brands are Really Celiac Safe

For the newly diagnosed celiac, that first trip to the grocery store is always a daunting task. What foods are safe? What's the difference between gluten free and gluten friendly? How can I make sure that the foods I purchase are safe for me to eat?

Many products claim to be gluten free, but how can we know for sure? Never fear! CDHF is here, and we're about to drop some serious gluten-free product knowledge.

The absolute best way to ensure that the foods you are buying are safe for you to eat, is to look for the stamp featured here on the right.

This stamp signifies that the products come from a GFCP (Gluten Free Certification Program) certified manufacturing facility and have successfully completed and passed a GFCP facility audit.

There are a few other types of certification programs out there, however, if you are a true celiac, we recommend sticking with the GFCP, and here's why:

GFCP Does more than just 'test' for gluten:

The market is saturated with gluten-free symbols, and the scary thing is, many of these symbols are 'self-declarations.' This means that the manufacturer using these symbols 'feels confident' that there is no gluten in their products. These claims do not need to be backed up by any sort of scientific testing, although, many companies do go as far as to test a small sample size of their product at the end of production. Using this method is high risk and does not guarantee that there has been no cross-contamination at any point in the manufacturing process.



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For a brand owner to successfully produce a gluten-free product certified by the GFCP, more than just their product is tested for gluten. The facility's gluten-free management system needs to be audited, not just inspected. These requirements are extremely thorough and strict, and also calls-out gluten as a food safety chemical hazard.

The GFCP is a standard developed with a set of requirements founded upon proven, globally recognized and science-based food safety protocols. As opposed to other gluten-free claims, the GFCP standard does not rely solely on analytical testing results. A GFCP-certified facility verifies its existing gluten-free management system annually, conducted by a trained and approved auditor who is employed by an ISO accredited and GFCP licensed certification body.

GFCP is a third-party certification:

Companies that claim to be 'Gluten Friendly,' or make other similar self-declarations of being gluten free, often do their testing in house. This means testing protocols will vary greatly from one brand to another. All brands that undergo GFCP Certifications are held to the same standards, so you know, moving from one certified product to the other, that all the check points will have been met.

For brands to be GFCP certified, they must go through an annual audit:

The new audit must be completed before the previous certification expires. This helps ensure that standards are maintained and kept up with on a regular basis.

GFCP is endorsed by the two leading celiac organizations in North America:

Both Beyond Celiac (formerly the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness) in the United States, and the Canadian Celiac Association, endorse the Gluten Free Certification program. These foundations help provide people with celiac disease the information and the support they need to make informed decisions in the marketplace. Their trust in the certification program is a healthy sign that foods that have undergone the GFCP's auditing process are safe for people with celiac disease to eat.

For more information on celiac disease, go to CDHF.ca/ceeliac. If you would like to take an even more in depth look into the GFCP's auditing and testing process, you can find information on their website at: glutenfreecert.com