
Gluten Free/ Casein Free

Gluten-Free

Gluten (in wheat, rye, barley, and possibly oats) and casein (in all dairy products) can cause problems:

1. They are common food allergens, especially in children and adults with autism.
2. Certain peptides from gluten and casein can bind to opioid-receptors in the brain, and can have a potent effect on behavior (like heroin or morphine), causing problems including sleepiness, inattention/"zoning out", and aggressive and self-abusive behavior. Like opioids, they can be highly addictive, and a lack of them can cause severe behaviors.

These problems appear to be due to:

- 1) A failure of the digestive tract to fully digest the gluten and casein peptides into single amino acids
- 2) Inflammation of the gut, allowing the gluten and casein peptides to enter the bloodstream and reach opioid receptors in the brain.
- 3) Gluten can increase symptoms of Autoimmune disorders
 - Total, 100% avoidance of all gluten products and all dairy products. Even small amounts, like a bite of a cookie, can cause allergic and/or opioid problems. Many foods have trace contamination with gluten, such as dusting French fries and raisins with wheat powder to keep them from sticking, so it can be very difficult to avoid all foods and contaminated foods. (Tip: if your child begins to self limit or obsess over any food question it.)
 - Digestive enzymes can also be helpful, especially if there is an accidental exposure, but they are probably not as helpful as a total avoidance of casein and gluten.
 - Many children with autism also benefit by removing corn and/or soy products.

Benefits: Children who most crave dairy and/or wheat, and who eat a lot of it, are most likely to benefit. Casein-free diets usually produce benefits within 1-3 weeks. Gluten free diets usually take 1-3 months to produce benefits. In some children there is a worsening of symptoms for a few days (similar to a drug withdrawal) followed by improvement.



Dairy/Casein Free

Since soy protein acts much like casein it is a good idea to avoid soy when going casein free.

Since sulfur issues are very common in our children, before embarking on a long commitment to be Casein Free, it is recommended to rule out sulfur issues. The most direct and logical approach is to begin a low sulfur diet trial. At the end of the exclusion week first introduce any foods on the high sulfur list other than eggs or dairy. After a few days if your child has no reaction, you can introduce eggs. Eat quite a few eggs over the next few days, if you still see no reaction introduce dairy. If you then see a reaction to the dairy you can be sure your child has a true casein intolerance.

How to Read a Label for a Milk-Free Diet

All FDA-regulated manufactured food products that contain milk as an ingredient are required by U.S. law to list the word "milk" on the product label.

Avoid foods that contain milk or any of these ingredients:

Butter, butter fat, etc	<i>(Milk is sometimes found in the following)</i>
butter ester(s)	Artificial butter flavor
Buttermilk	Baked Goods
Casein	Caramel Candies
Casein Hydrolysate	Chocolate
Caseinates (in all forms)	Lactic acid/ bacterial cultures
Cheese	Luncheon meat, Hot dogs, Sausages
Cottage Cheese	Margarine
Curds	Nisin
Custard	Nondairy products
Diacetyl	Nougat
Ghee	Calcium Additives
Half-and-half	
Lactalbumin, Lactoferrin	
Lactose	
Lactulose	
Milk (in all forms)	
Milk protein hydrolysate	
Pudding	
Recaldent (R)	
Rennet Casein	
Sour cream	
Tagatose	
Whey and whey protein (in all forms)	
Yogurt	

