

# A Guide to Managing **WHEAT ALLERGY**



Wheat is one of the most common food allergies worldwide. Some studies estimate up to 1% of U.S. children have a wheat allergy.

## What Are Symptoms of a Wheat Allergy?

When you have a wheat allergy, you need to be aware of the symptoms of anaphylaxis. Symptoms of anaphylaxis may include hives, vomiting, or trouble breathing. The first-line treatment for anaphylaxis is injectable epinephrine.

### Common signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in children, teens, and adults:

- Skin rash, itching, hives
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat
- Shortness of breath, trouble breathing, wheezing (whistling sound during breathing)
- Stomach pain, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Uterine cramps
- Feeling like something awful is about to happen

### Common signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in infants and toddlers:<sup>1</sup>

- Skin rash, itching, hives
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, or throat; ear pulling, scratching or putting fingers in ears; tongue thrusting or pulling
- Coughing, wheezing, hoarse cry, noisy breathing, chest or neck tugging, nostril flaring
- Stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, spitting up, hiccups
- Arching back, bringing knees to the chest
- Rubbing eyes, itchy or red eyes

### Other signs and symptoms of a wheat allergy may include:

- Blood in stools, especially in infants
- Loose stools, constipation
- Upset stomach, stomach cramps, bloating
- Failure to thrive (slow to grow or gain weight) or weight loss

## How Can I Prevent Wheat Allergy Reactions?

Wheat can be found in almost any type of food. Foods that contain wheat include breads, baked goods, pasta, meat that is breaded, and so much more.

The only way to avoid an allergic reaction is to remove wheat completely from your child's diet. But you can successfully manage your wheat allergy.

What you can do:

- Work with your doctor
- Read labels
- Be aware of cross-contact (when foods come into contact with each other and may transfer an allergen into a food that shouldn't have it)
- Communicate clearly with school staff, people who prepare your child's food, and babysitters and other caregivers

### Reading Labels

By law, food companies must label their products clearly if they contain wheat. The law requires companies to clearly name wheat on the label.

When reading labels for wheat, it may be in parentheses after an ingredient in the ingredient list. It could also be in a statement under the ingredient list. Sometimes it will be in **bold**.

For example:

- Flour (wheat)
- Contains: Wheat

Sometimes wheat may appear in **bold** print in the ingredient list too. To avoid wheat in foods and other products, it helps to learn the different names of wheat.

Some foods and products do not have to follow the allergy label law and may contain wheat:

- Arts and crafts supplies
- Prescription and over-the-counter drugs
- Cosmetics and personal care items (such as, makeup, lotions, and soaps)
- Alcohol
- Toys
- Pet food
- Food served in restaurants, cafeterias, or by other food service providers

Most states in the U.S. do not have regulations regarding food allergies and restaurants. Ingredients in restaurant foods may vary. Cross-contact is also more likely. Look for places that have food allergy policies and allergy menus. Give the staff a chef card that alerts them to your allergy and lists wheat.



**If a food item does not have a label, you can't read it, or you have any doubts, don't eat it. Always read the entire label every time. Food companies may change their recipes.**

## Does My Child Need to Avoid Foods Related to Wheat?

There is a 20% chance your child could have an allergy to more than one grain.<sup>2</sup> Examples of grains other than wheat are rye, barley, rice, corn, or oats. If your child does not have symptoms to other grains, you do not need to remove them from their diet.



Kids with Food Allergies has many resources to help you manage food allergies. Search our Safe Eats® Allergy-Friendly Recipes Collection of almost 1,500 member-submitted recipes at: [kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes](https://kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes)

## Will My Child Outgrow Their Wheat Allergy?

Around 65% (two out of three) kids with wheat allergy outgrow it by age 12.<sup>3</sup> But for some people, a wheat allergy can be life-long.

### References

1. Pistiner, M., Mendez-Reyes, J. E., Eftekhari, S., Carver, M., Lieberman, J., Wang, J., & Camargo, C. A. (2021). Caregiver-reported presentation of severe food-induced allergic reactions in infants and toddlers. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaip.2020.11.005>
2. Sicherer, SH. (2002). Clinical implications of cross-reactive food allergens. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, Volume 108, Issue 6, 881 – 890. Retrieved online on December 15, 2022, at [http://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749\(01\)63295-0/fulltext](http://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749(01)63295-0/fulltext).
3. American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. (n.d.). Wheat & Gluten Allergy | Symptoms & Treatment. American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. Retrieved December 14, 2022, from <https://acaai.org/allergies/allergic-conditions/food/wheat-gluten/>



## Is There a Treatment for Wheat Allergy?

Many allergists have been offering OIT treatment using foods in various forms, such as a liquid, flour, or the actual food itself. These methods are not approved by the FDA. Talk with your child's allergist about the most appropriate OIT option for your child. The FDA is looking at other food allergy treatments to fast track through the approval process to address this unmet need in the food allergy community.



Sign up for KFA's community to stay up to date on wheat allergy news: [kidswithfoodallergies.org/join](https://kidswithfoodallergies.org/join)



# WHEAT INGREDIENT LIST



**Wheat can appear on food labels under many different names. To avoid wheat in foods and other products, it helps to learn the different names of wheat. If you see these ingredients on a label or menu, it means it contains wheat protein and is not safe for someone with wheat allergy. If the product is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the word “wheat” must appear on the label.**

## Contains Wheat

**Bread** — any type made with white flour, wheat flour; bread crumbs

**Bulgur**

**Cereal extract**

**Couscous**

**Cracker meal**

**Einkorn**

**Emmer** — also known as farro

**Farina**

**Farro**

**Flour** — all-purpose, atta, bread, bromated, cake, club, common, durum, einkorn, emmer, enriched, farina, graham, ground, high gluten, high protein, instant pastry, kamut, maida, phosphated, plain, self-rising, semolina, soft wheat, spelt, steel ground, stone, triticale, Triticum, unbleached, white, whole wheat

**Freekeh, frikeh, farik**

**Fu**

**Gluten** — wheat gluten, vital gluten, vital wheat gluten, fu

**Hydrolyzed wheat protein**

**Kamut®** — khorasan wheat

**Malt, malt extract**

**Matzo** — Matzo meal (also spelled as matzoh, matzah, or matza)

**Noodles, pasta**

**Seitan**

**Semolina**

**Spelt**

**Tabbouleh**

**Triticale**

**Triticum**

**Wheat, whole wheat** — wheat berries, wheat bran, whole wheat bread, whole wheat flour, wheat germ, wheat germ oil, wheat protein isolate, wheat starch, wheat sprouts, sprouted wheat

**Wheatgrass**

Note: Buckwheat is not related to wheat and is considered safe for people with wheat allergy.

## Wheat Is Sometimes Found in

Artificial flavoring, natural flavoring

Caramel color

Dextrin

Food starch\*, gelatinized starch, modified starch, modified food starch, vegetable starch

Glucose syrup

Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP)

Maltodextrin

Monosodium glutamate (MSG)

Oats\*\*

Plant-based meat alternatives

Soy sauce, shoyu, tamari, teriyaki sauce

Surimi

Textured vegetable protein (TVP)

Vegetable gum

However, if a food is regulated by the FDA, the word “wheat” must appear on the label.

\*Unless otherwise stated on the food label, the single word “starch” in an ingredient list means corn starch. Starches from other sources should be designated by some non-misleading term that indicates the source of such starch, for example, “wheat starch.”

\*\*Wheat-free and gluten-free oats can be found from special suppliers.

## Botanical Names of Wheat (Sometimes Found in Personal Care Products)

Club wheat (*Triticum compactum* Host.)

Common wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.)

Durum wheat (*Triticum durum* Desf.)

Einkorn (*Triticum monococcum* L. subsp. *monococcum*)

Emmer (*Triticum turgidum* L. subsp. *dicoccon* (Schrank) Thell.)

Kamut (*Triticum polonicum* L.)

Semolina (*Triticum durum* Desf.)

Spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.)

Triticale ( x *Triticosecale* ssp. Wittm.)

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For more information and other resources, please visit: [kidswithfoodallergies.org/wheat](https://kidswithfoodallergies.org/wheat)

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# WHEAT ALLERGY Chef Cards

Take all food allergies seriously. • Read all ingredient labels.

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When you eat out, use these chef cards to let the restaurant staff know how to help you avoid allergic reactions to wheat.

**I have a wheat allergy!**  
**I must avoid all foods that contain wheat.**

**Contains Wheat**

All-purpose flour	Flour	Noodles, pasta
Bread	Freekeh, frikeh, farik	Seitan
Bulgur	Fu	Semolina
Cereal extract	Gluten	Spelt
Couscous	Hydrolyzed wheat protein	Tabbouleh
Cracker meal	Kamut® – khorasan wheat	Triticale
Einkorn	Malt, malt extract	Triticum
Emmer	Matzo	Wheat, whole wheat
Farina		Wheatgrass
Farro		

**Wheat Is Sometimes Found in**

Artificial flavoring, natural flavoring	modified food starch, vegetable starch	Plant-based meat alternatives
Caramel color	Glucose syrup	Soy sauce, shoyu, tamari, teriyaki sauce
Dextrin	Hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP)	Surimi
Food starch, gelatinized starch, modified starch,	Maltodextrin	Textured vegetable protein (TVP)
	Monosodium glutamate (MSG)	Vegetable gum
	Oats	

Please check all foods for the ingredients on this card, including cooking oils, marinades, sauces, and seasonings. Use separate and clean utensils, equipment, surfaces, and gloves.

**KFA** Kids with Food Allergies For more detailed information and a list of resources, please visit: [kidswithfoodallergies.org/wheat](http://kidswithfoodallergies.org/wheat)  
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**CHEF: FOOD ALLERGY ALERT**

**I have food allergies!**  
In order for me to avoid an allergic reaction, I **must avoid** all food that contain:

<input type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Egg	Other Allergens: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Peanut	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat	<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sesame	<input type="checkbox"/> Soy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish	_____

**Before preparing my food, please take these steps to help keep me safe. I appreciate you!**

- Read labels to look for the allergens listed on the front of this card. Please check all foods including cooking oils, marinades, sauces and seasonings.
- Please use separate and clean utensils, equipment and surfaces to prepare my meal.
- Wash hands with soapy water and change gloves.

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