

Date:

Name:

DOB:

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that you have a student with Celiac disease. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder that damages the small intestine and interferes with proper absorption of nutrients. People who suffer from celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, a type of protein, which is found in wheat, barley, rye and possibly oats.

Gluten is found throughout the Western diet and is widely used in processed foods and oral medications. In addition, there are some hidden sources of gluten both in food and in unusual items such as art supplies and postage stamps, and other classroom items. Maintaining a gluten-free diet can be challenging but is possible when appropriate supports are in place.

If the student with celiac disease inadvertently ingests gluten, his or her parents should be notified. There are a variety of symptoms that children may display when exposed to gluten. A physical exam by a doctor or school nurse may be needed. Some children develop gastrointestinal (GI) upset manifested by abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, gas, bloating or constipation. Other children display more subtle symptoms such as inability to concentrate, restlessness, irritability, or sleepiness. Symptoms can come on suddenly or occur a few days later. Some children may not display any overt symptoms, but exposure to gluten will have damaging effects on their small intestine. Reinforcing good hand-washing techniques can help prevent inadvertent ingestion of gluten.

Celiac disease is not an allergy that results in anaphylactic reactions. Therefore, an Epi-pen is not needed. The student does not need to take medications for celiac disease.

To best prepare for events in the classroom, it is advisable to meet with the parents of the celiac child early, preferably before the school year starts. Parents are your best resource for obtaining clarity about what the celiac student can and cannot eat, as well as understanding the student's understanding of the disease from a developmental standpoint. Establish a consistent communication plan with your student's parents throughout the year. A developed clear plan with regard to school projects, field trips, parties and meals in the cafeteria is needed. You can support your student by limiting or removing food used as part of the curriculum or in classroom celebrations. If food needs to be used, consider using gluten-free alternatives. It is also important to maintain the student's privacy and not single them out based on this diet restriction.

If you are in need of additional suggestions regarding 504 accommodations, we are more than willing to help provide those. Other helpful websites are: <http://www.celiac.org> , www.celiac.com and <https://www.gluten.org/community/kids/504-plan/>

If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Seattle Children's Celiac Disease Program