

Expert shares gluten-free Thanksgiving tips

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Loved ones need to understand risks some foods pose for those with celiac disease.

(HealthDay)—Thanksgiving meals can pose a challenge for people who have to eat a gluten-free diet, an expert says.

Many traditional Thanksgiving dishes—such as turkey, corn, sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce—are gluten-free, but "when it comes to pies, stuffing, gravy, etc., gluten-free substitutes may need to be considered," Dr. Anca Safta, director of the Gluten and Allergic Digestive Disorders program at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in North Carolina, said in a center news release.

"For those with celiac disease or non-celiac [gluten sensitivity](#) (NCGS), it's never a good time to cheat. But removing gluten from a Thanksgiving menu doesn't have to take the joy out of the holiday," she said.

People with celiac disease or NCGS need to educate their family and friends about their condition. Most people don't mind going gluten-free for one meal if they understand the harm—such as pain and intestinal damage—that gluten can cause to people with [celiac disease](#) or NCGS, according to Safta.

Look for the gluten-free (GF) label on foods. In most cases, gluten-free alternatives to gluten-containing grains, condiments, sauces and dishes can be bought at a store or made at home.

Gluten-free doesn't mean taste-free. In fact, a gluten-free version of a dish may actually taste better than the original. Experiment beforehand to test and perfect gluten-free recipes, Safta suggested.

"What's a Thanksgiving without pumpkin pie and macaroni and cheese? Well, there's no need to find out," she said. "Make the pie crust with gluten-free graham cracker crumbs, and find [gluten](#)-free elbows. No one will have to give up his or her favorite dish, just certain ingredients."

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [celiac disease](#).

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