

# Cross contamination and Social life

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## Eating out.

In Most areas and countries, restaurants are not required to undergo any special training when it comes to celiac disease.

So therefore you need to keep in mind that while the food on the menu might say gluten-free, but it might not be safe.

The staff may not be trained to know about cross contamination when it comes to Celiac Disease. They are not aware that **extra caution** needs to be taken when preparing, handling, storing and cooking food.

The countertops are used to prepare all kinds of foods and your gluten-free food could be amongst that food, touching it, the same knife, surface, pan etc, being used in preparing it.

The counter may have flour on from rolling out pizza. Your pizza is being prepared on that same counter and is going into the same oven that has flour everywhere inside it, which is now being stoked and the flour rises into the air and lands on your gluten-free pizza. This is why it is not a good idea to get pizza from take-aways or restaurants unless they are a dedicated gluten-free restaurant.

Your chips are being fried in the same oil that just had battered fish in it.

## Tips

- Call the restaurant to discuss your dietary requirements and if they can meet them.
- **Phone ahead** and make sure sure that, not only are there gluten-free options, but that the chef is aware of celiac and the possible risks associated.

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## Events and Functions

Here is another avenue of social life that is out of our control.

We can think about attending a wedding, party, work function, These are all occasions where food is present, normally prepared in advance to a set menu.

## Tips

- Speak to the host prior to the event. Explain your concerns and remember to clearly state that you don't just have a dietary preference, but you have a medical autoimmune condition so you cannot take any chances.
- If you cannot speak to the host or find out what the menu is beforehand then I really recommending just taking with your own meal. You also want to enjoy yourself!
- You could also eat something small before attending a function or event if you feel uncomfortable about taking your own meal.
- You can also take snacks with and a small bite to eat just in case I find there is nothing I can eat. Preferably like a protein bar, something of substance that can tie you over.

## Friends and Family

One would think that area poses the least threat, however, due to the lack of understanding and education on their part, it is where we can experience just as much cross contamination.

## Tip

- Education starts with us being able to educate others. It can a long time for us to learn the ins and outs of our own condition so remember when this when dealing with others who do not have to worry like we do. Be patient as well as it can take a long time for them to learn what you can and cannot eat.