

Glucose syrup derived from wheat

Background

A change made by FSANZ to Standard 1.2.3 of the Food Standards Code in 2016 prompted Coeliac Australia (CA) to review its position on wheat derived glucose syrup. The change means that manufacturers are no longer required to declare when glucose syrup is wheat derived if detectable gluten levels in the glucose syrup do not exceed 20ppm.

For more than 10 years, CA has held the view that wheat glucose syrup is 'gluten free' and suitable for the gluten free diet, based on information available to us at the time that it always contained 'no detectable gluten'.

In response to the change to the code, CA has consulted with relevant experts and is advised that products containing wheat glucose syrup continue to be suitable for the vast majority of individuals with coeliac disease.

CA understands that sensitivity to gluten varies amongst those with coeliac disease; the choice to consume products containing glucose syrup remains individual. While CA considers any potential risk to be negligible, adequate medical follow up is recommended for all people with coeliac disease to ensure effective disease management.

It is important to note the allergen exemption for wheat derived glucose syrup does not affect the gluten free labelling laws. Food labelled gluten free must have no detectable gluten.

Key Points

1. This change does not mean there will be any change to the way foods are manufactured or the amount of gluten in foods containing wheat glucose syrup.
2. The majority of wheat derived glucose (at least 90%) contains no detectable gluten.
3. Less than 10% of wheat derived glucose might contain up to 10ppm of gluten (extremely low levels).
4. The properties of glucose syrup change when protein (e.g. gluten) levels higher than 15ppm are present; it becomes unusable for food manufacturing.
5. Glucose syrup is only one of many ingredients in manufactured foods and will comprise a maximum 50% of a product (usually much less) i.e. it is further diluted.
6. Food items that contain wheat glucose are not staple food items that are consumed in large quantities on a regular basis, further reducing any potential risk.

More information:

CA website link: www.coeliac.org.au/gluten-free/

FSANZ risk assessment link:

www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/proposals/Pages/P1031Allergenlabellingexemptions.aspx

For further information

1300 458 836

www.coeliac.org.au

Frequently asked questions

1. What change has FSANZ made to the Food Standards code relating to Glucose Syrup?

Food manufacturers are no longer required to state on packaging that glucose syrup is made from wheat if detectable gluten levels in the glucose syrup are below 20ppm.

2. How much gluten might be present in products that contain Glucose Syrup?

The vast majority of wheat derived glucose syrups (at least 90%) contain no detectable gluten. Less than 10% of wheat derived glucose may contain up to 10ppm of gluten (i.e. 10 parts in every million parts – an extremely low level).

As glucose syrup is only one of many ingredients in manufactured foods, and will usually comprise much less than 50% of a product (i.e. it is highly diluted with other ingredients), the presence of any detectable gluten is very unlikely.

Example:

A person eating 150g of a confectionery item that contains 50% wheat glucose (that contains 10ppm gluten) will consume less than 1mg of gluten (1mg is 1/1000th of a gram).

3. Can people with coeliac disease still consume products containing Glucose Syrup?

Medical experts advise that products containing glucose syrup made from wheat are still suitable for the vast majority of people with coeliac disease or those medically diagnosed as requiring a gluten free diet.

4. I am very sensitive. Can I have products that contain Glucose Syrup?

Coeliac Australia understands that sensitivity to gluten varies amongst those with coeliac disease. The choice to consume products that are not labelled gluten free, and that contain glucose syrup made from wheat, must be made by each person in consultation with their medical adviser.

While the current medical advice is that the risk is negligible, ongoing medical follow up and dietary guidance is essential for all people with coeliac disease to ensure effective disease management.

5. Can a product be labelled 'gluten free' if it contains Glucose Syrup?

Gluten free labelling rules have not changed. Food manufacturers can label any product "gluten free" if it does not contain detectable gluten.

6. Labelling: What information about Glucose Syrup will I see on labels?

You may see the following on labels:

- 'Glucose Syrup (Wheat)': The source is wheat. Manufacturers may still choose to voluntarily declare the glucose is from wheat even though they are no longer required to.
- 'Glucose Syrup': The source may be wheat or a non-gluten grain.
- 'Glucose Syrup (Maize/non-gluten grain)': The source is a non-gluten grain.

7. What foods typically contain glucose syrup?

Glucose syrup is a sweetener that is typically included in confectionary, ice cream and a range of other sweetened foods.

The food items that contain glucose are not generally staple food items that are consumed in large quantities on a regular basis, further reducing any potential risk.

8. Glucose Syrups are often made from a non-gluten source.

Glucose syrups are typically made from a non-gluten source such as maize (corn) and less commonly from rice and potato.

9. Gluten Free Label

A Gluten Free label on a product overrides the ingredient list – it contains no-detectable gluten.