



## Gluten Dietary Management Position Statement

The primary mission at Camp Swamp is the safety of your child prompting every consideration in regards to their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. In doing so, the physical components of dietary needs, allergies and medication management are a critical part of the pre-camp review process. We rely on accurate and up-to-date information that each of you provides in order to respond and meet your child's typical daily needs while attending camp. Often, follow up phone calls are conducted by the medical review panel for clarification and further understanding of your child's needs, which, in turn, leads to case-by-case discussions by our leadership staff for your child's best medical outcome; thus, the purpose of this poignant statement.

Recently, and more common, the issue of *gluten* dietary concerns has increased requiring greater attention to requested meal tendencies, offerings and individual regulation. Together, our food preparation staff and medical team have researched and considered plausible solutions, efforts, and the unfortunate but necessary limitations in addressing this legitimately unique, individual need while simultaneously balancing the planned and implemented nutritional needs of an entire camp and staff for ongoing, multiple daily meals.

For this reason, we have taken substantial time and sought considerable counsel in this area in order to develop a position and policy regarding this particular dietary topic. This memo is purposed to communicate the result in a clear and precise fashion. The first section below outlines our medical understanding based on latest research; the second section conveys our position based on this understanding; and the last section addresses the practical outcomes of our position, which will be put into effect this year.

### **MEDICAL STATEMENT**

Below is a general medical update on the latest literature and recommendations for the current understanding of *gluten* and its dietary effects.

So, what is *gluten*? *Gluten* refers to the protein component (gliadin and glutenin) of cereal grains from the Triticeae tribe of grasses - primarily wheat, barley, and rye. It is relatively indigestible. *Gluten* is important in baking, as it provides elasticity and other characteristics to dough. Recently, gluten extracted from wheat varieties is added to many foods, leading to three times the gluten consumption since 1977. (Brown. Expert Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2012).

Only celiac disease (CD), which affects approximately 1% of the American population, requires strict *gluten* avoidance; yet more than 30% of US adults report having reduced their *gluten* intake, most claiming they did so to promote a "healthier" diet or support weight loss. (Capili. J Nurse Pract. 2014).



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*Gluten sensitivity* (GS) now includes a group of *gluten*-intolerance conditions unrelated to CD - primarily *non-celiac gluten sensitivity* (NCGS) and wheat allergy (WA). These conditions do in fact demonstrate a resolution of symptoms when the patient is placed on a *gluten-free* diet. Although, NCGS lacks clarity with regard to incidence, diagnosis, and pathology (Sapone. BMC Med. 2012). NCGS remains poorly understood. It has been suggested that NCGS be viewed as a variant of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), not triggered by *gluten* but by poorly absorbed carbohydrates found in wheat (Biesiekierski. Gastroenterology. 2013). Development of *gluten sensitivity* is believed to be triggered by such factors as intestinal infections, altered microbiota, or food additives. Despite this, NCGS does present gastrointestinal and extra- intestinal symptoms that certainly require attention.

Prominent symptoms of NCGS occur soon after *gluten* ingestion and disappear within days to weeks of gluten avoidance. The classic NCGS presentation combines IBS-like symptoms, such as abdominal cramps, bloating, diarrhea, and constipation, with systemic manifestations that include “brain fog”, fatigue, headache, joint and muscle pain, peripheral numbness, skin rash, aphthous stomatitis, anemia, and depression or anxiety.

All in all, research into *non-celiac gluten sensitivity* remains limited and conflicting, and bio-makers for the disorder are not yet known. Unsupported or not, many attribute mood disorders, pain, and chronic ills to gluten intake. Rather than dismiss their claims, clinicians are providing pertinent instructions on a gluten-free lifestyle and healthy diet to their patients.

### OPERATIONAL POSITION

*We at Camp Swamp wish to support your choice to follow those instructions and the resulting individual routine as best we can, based on the dietary information you provide, while balancing the feasibility of doing so in our camp setting. NOTE: Importance resides in the information provided to our food service staff and medical review panel to prepare and plan for each camper well in advance of presenting or registering for Camp Swamp events.*

Your consideration and understanding in knowing that food is prepared en-masse (approx. 750 meals a day) in an efficient, economic, and timely fashion for multiple daily offerings, which imposes limitations on addressing each individual’s specific need, is appreciated.

**In light of all the above, we have chosen not to offer an intentional, separate gluten-free menu.** However, many campers, volunteers, and even our director (who has eaten gluten-free for the past two summers) have



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successfully participated in a gluten-free experience while going through the food line and choosing items without gluten. Fruits and/or fresh vegetables are offered at every meal, and many people decline the bun and put meat on the side, on top of their salad or on tortilla chips (depending on the meal). Gluten-free cereal is also available at every breakfast. The responsibility, therefore, lies with each camper in food choices and alternatives.

### **Practical Outcomes and Expectations:**

Due to our choice, above, limited kitchen space and staff limitations, **only pre-approved meal substitutes will be accepted in the Camp Swamp kitchen.** These preparations must be convenient, require minimal storage requirements, and preparation.

Campers *are* welcome to bring ready serve items from home to keep in their cabin. (We recommend airtight containers to keep critters out.) The key is in advanced planning, coordination, and conversation so that we here at Camp Swamp can make this experience the safest place other than your home.

Therefore, if your child requires special food handling due to the described conditions as stated above, we require a conversation with you at least 30 days prior to your child's arrival. We will no longer accept on-the-spot, special food arrangements at check-in. Just to be clear your child will be turned away and rescheduled, based on availability, to another week, if their food arrangements have not been pre-approved prior to check-in.

I thank you for your understanding, support, and diligence in following this position.

Regards,

Jeff Rorabaugh  
Swamp Director