



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Communication

1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

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Contact: Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins, DeCA dietitian
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8404
E-mail: karen.hawkins@deca.mil

Going gluten-free in the commissary is getting easier

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,
DeCA dietitian*

Editor's note: *This is the third in a series of three articles designed to help explain what going gluten-free is all about.*

FORT LEE, Va. – Our customers continue to reach out to us to find out more about shopping for gluten-free foods in the commissary.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brent Rassat recently said, “I just read your article on the DeCA Web site about gluten-free diets and products. My son has been diagnosed with behavioral disorders that recommend a gluten-free and casein-free diet. This is something we are just starting out, so finding products that are GFCF is a challenge, especially here in Louisiana. I am pleased that Fort Polk’s commissary has a selection of gluten-free products.”

Not to stop there, we continue to work with families, such as Rassat’s, to help them find foods that fit their family’s special dietary needs.

What is a gluten-free and casein-free diet?

A gluten-free and casein-free diet is also known as the GFCF diet. It is one of several alternative treatments for children with autism. When following this strict elimination diet, all foods containing gluten and casein are removed from the child’s daily food intake.

Some parents of children with autism believe their children are allergic or sensitive to certain things found in foods. Along with this belief, there is a growing trend in autism treatment programs to prescribe the GFCF diet in treating autistic children. Some say the diet contributes

to improvements in the children's speech and behavior.

How does a gluten-free and casein-free diet for autism work?

It is thought that children with autism may have an allergy or high sensitivity to certain foods, especially those that contain gluten and casein. According to this theory, children, digest and absorb peptides and proteins in foods containing gluten and casein differently than other people do. Some scientists believe that the brain recognizes and treats these proteins like false opiate-type chemicals. The reaction to these chemicals, they say, contributes to how the child behaves and acts. So a diet free of gluten and casein is given to children with autism with the hope of reducing symptoms while improving social and cognitive behaviors and speech.

In some studies researchers have found abnormal levels of peptides in bodily fluids of some people who have symptoms of autism. Still, there is not enough evidence that using the GFCF diet for treating autism works. Yet, families such as Rassat's will continue trying to help their children with behavioral disorders and reaching out for support. The commissary is glad to help by offering them gluten-free products at savings of 30 percent or more.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*