

Coeliac Disease

A Quick Guide



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You have been referred to see a Dietitian for advice and support in the management of your newly diagnosed Coeliac Disease. We understand that finding out that you have Coeliac Disease can be a little over-whelming and there is a lot of new information for you to take on.

The information provided in this leaflet should help you to understand a little bit more about your Coeliac Disease and its treatment, which will help you to get started with your gluten-free diet until you come and see the Dietitian. We will provide you with more information and support when you attend clinic.

What is Coeliac Disease?

Coeliac Disease is an autoimmune condition by which your immune system reacts to the gluten found within certain foods in a negative response, causing damage to the small bowel.

What is Gluten?

Gluten is a general term for the proteins found in wheat, barley and rye: therefore a person with Coeliac Disease should avoid eating foods which contain wheat, barley and rye. Gluten acts like a glue, which holds our food together and gives them shape.

When a person with Coeliac Disease ingests gluten, this causes damage to the lining of the small bowel. This in turn can result in that person being less able to absorb some nutrients found within food, such as iron, calcium or vitamin B12.

Note: Gluten may also be found in some oats and therefore you should avoid these until you have seen your Dietitian.

What are the symptoms of Coeliac Disease?

The symptoms associated with Coeliac Disease may vary from person to person, however the most common ones are:

- Diarrhoea
- Bloating
- Stomach cramping
- Anaemia
- Skin Rash (Dermatitis Herpetiformis)
- Tiredness or fatigue
- Weight loss

Some people do not experience any symptoms, but this does not mean that you do not have Coeliac Disease or that your small bowel will not become damaged if you continue to eat gluten.

How is Coeliac Disease Treated?

The only treatment for Coeliac Disease is to follow a strict gluten free diet. Eliminating gluten from your diet allows your bowel lining to regrow and repair any previous damage caused by the ingestion of gluten, and your symptoms will improve. Continuing adherence to a gluten-free diet can also help to reduce the risk of the long term secondary complications of Coeliac Disease, such as osteoporosis and iron deficiency anaemia.

The time it takes for someone to feel better on a gluten-free diet can vary. Many people feel better within a few days and usually symptoms such as nausea, diarrhoea and bloating will clear up within a few weeks. The time it takes for the bowel damage to completely resolve, will also vary and this can take between six months and two years.

Which foods contain Gluten?

The most obvious sources of gluten in the diet are:

- Bread, pasta, breakfast cereals, flour, pizza bases, pastry, cakes and biscuits.
- Gluten can also be found in foods such as soups, sauces, ready meals and processed foods such as sausages, fish fingers, scotch eggs, chicken nuggets and all breaded and battered fish and meat.
- Malted milk drinks, barley water, beer, lager and stout are all made from barley and must be eliminated from your diet. **Note:** Gluten-free options are now available to purchase.

Gluten can sometimes be 'hidden' in foods within the ingredients list. Foods that have the following ingredients should be avoided as they also contain gluten:

Wheat starch	Modified wheat starch
Wheat flour	Wheat rusk
Wheat bran	Barley flour
Barley malt	Rye flour
Oat bran	Bulgar wheat
Couscous	Spelt
Semolina	

Which foods are naturally gluten free?

The good news is that a lot of foods are naturally gluten free and therefore safe to eat. These can include the following:

- Plain meats or fish
- Fruits and vegetables
- Cheese, plain yogurt and milk
- Rice, corn, potato, buckwheat, quinoa, and millet are also gluten free.

Where can I buy gluten free food?

Gluten free food is available to buy in most UK supermarkets. Some of this will be in the 'free from' section of the supermarket but there is a lot of other food in the supermarket that is also gluten free including the naturally gluten free food listed earlier.

You should begin to look at the labels of foods that you normally eat to find out whether these are gluten free and suitable to continue consuming.

Who can I contact for support?

Coeliac UK is a charity set up to support patients with Coeliac Disease.



We recommend that everyone with Coeliac Disease join Coeliac UK to receive regular updates, access to supporting information and the Food and Drink Directory. You can also download the Coeliac UK mobile or tablet app to help with your shopping which has the added feature of being able to scan product barcodes to determine whether or not the food product is gluten free and suitable for consumption. **Note:** bar code scanning feature is only available on smart phones that possess a camera.

Coeliac UK Contacts

Tel: 0333 332 2033 (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm)

Email: generalenquiries@coeliac.org.uk

Web page: www.coeliac.org.uk

There is also a local Liverpool group that meet monthly and can offers you support and gives you the chance to share tips and ideas with others.

Please ask your Dietitian for contact details of your local group.

Aintree University Hospital Dietitian

You can contact the Nutrition and Dietetics Department to speak to a Dietitian from Monday to Friday on 0151 529 3473.



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

Tel No: 0151 529 2906

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