



# Your gluten-free life

An essential guide



We are the leading charity working for people with coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis.

### Welcome to your gluten-free life.

As a Member of Coeliac UK, you have the following benefits and support:

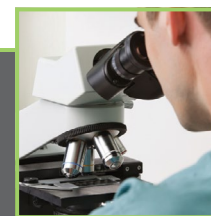
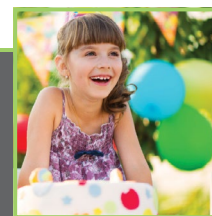
- access to the Food and Drink Directory
- Gluten-free on the Move smartphone app
- Your gluten-free life
- email newsletters
- Helpline support
- Venue Guide on our website
- Recipe Database on our website
- online publications and leaflets
- monthly Food and Drink Directory updates
- food alerts
- Crossed Grain magazine
- Local Voluntary Support Groups
- support networks
- personalised Scrapbook on our website
- a chance to get involved in campaigning and research.

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**0333 332 2033**  
Call us for more information



## What is coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease (pronounced 'see-liac') is a serious illness where the body's immune system attacks its own tissues when gluten is eaten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Some people with coeliac disease may also be sensitive to oats. This causes damage to the lining of the gut and means that the body cannot properly absorb nutrients from food. It is not an allergy or food intolerance. Other parts of the body may also be affected.

Around 1 in 100 people has coeliac disease, although many people are not yet diagnosed with the condition. Coeliac disease does run in families but not in a predictable way. There is a 1 in 10 chance that close relatives of people with coeliac disease will have the condition but this means that there is a 90% chance that a family member will not be affected.

Coeliac disease can be diagnosed at any age; either in childhood after gluten-containing foods have been introduced into the diet, or later in life. Like many autoimmune diseases, coeliac disease is more common in women than men.

### What is dermatitis herpetiformis?

Dermatitis herpetiformis (DH) is the skin manifestation of coeliac disease and affects around 1 in 3,300 people. It can appear at any age but is not often seen in children and is most common in people in their fifties or sixties. The treatment for DH is a gluten-free diet, however some people also need a medication, commonly Dapsone, to help treat the condition. For more information, see our list of resources on page 37.

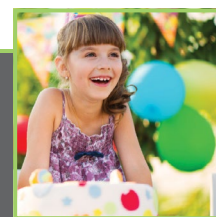
### What happens in coeliac disease?

When people with coeliac disease eat gluten, the lining of the gut where food and nutrients are absorbed becomes damaged. Tiny, finger like projections called villi which line the gut become inflamed and then flattened, leaving less surface area to absorb nutrients from food. People with undiagnosed and untreated coeliac disease can have a wide range of symptoms and nutritional deficiencies as a result of the damage to the lining of the gut.

### How to get diagnosed

The first step in diagnosis of coeliac disease is a simple blood test. This looks for the antibodies produced in response to eating gluten. It is essential that you keep eating gluten before and throughout the testing process, otherwise your body won't produce antibodies and you could get a false negative result. Gluten must be eaten in more than one meal every day for six weeks before testing.

If the blood test is positive you will be referred for a gut biopsy. This means a small camera, called an endoscope, is passed through your mouth and stomach then into the gut. Small samples of the gut are collected and then examined for signs of coeliac disease. For some children, a biopsy may not be needed. You can find more information at [www.coeliac.org.uk/coeliacdiseaseinchildren](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/coeliacdiseaseinchildren)



### What do I need to do?

After a confirmed diagnosis, it is important to start a gluten-free diet. Once gluten has been removed from the diet, the gut will begin to heal and you will usually start to feel better within a few weeks. However, it can take between six months and up to five years (and in some cases longer) for the gut damage caused by eating gluten to fully heal.

After diagnosis, it is important to see a dietitian who can provide information about the gluten-free diet and advise you on changes that need to be made to your diet. You may be asked to fill in a food diary so the dietitian has a good idea of what you normally eat. They may also discuss gluten-free foods available on prescription.

Your GP or consultant can arrange a referral to a dietitian for you. Some people with coeliac disease can be deficient in important nutrients so your dietitian will also discuss ways to achieve a balanced diet. Sometimes this involves taking dietary supplements. After following a gluten-free diet for some time, absorption of nutrients from food will improve so supplements may not be necessary in the long term. For advice on this speak to your GP or dietitian.



## The gluten-free diet

We provide a range of information and tools to support you as you begin your gluten-free diet. Refer to your Welcome Pack, our website or our smartphone app, Gluten-free on the Move, for more information.

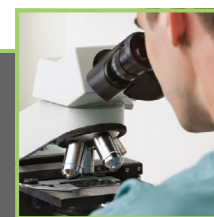
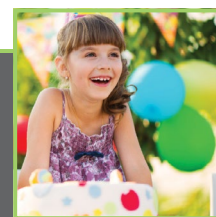
### What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein in the grains wheat, barley and rye. Most people with coeliac disease are able to have gluten-free oats, however some people may be sensitive to avenin, the protein in oats, see page 22 for more information. Gluten is commonly found in foods such as bread, biscuits, pasta and cakes but it is also in foods that you may not expect, such as some sauces, ready meals and sausages. Our Gluten-free Checklist, available in hardcopy or on our smartphone app, is a guide to the types of foods that can be eaten, those that can't and those that need to be checked.

### So, what can I eat?

There are many naturally gluten-free foods such as meat, poultry, fish, cheese, milk, fruit, potatoes, vegetables, pulses, rice and corn. Gluten-free 'substitute' foods including bread and pasta are also available:

- on prescription in most parts of the UK through your GP or pharmacist. Check online at [www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies)
- in the Free From range in supermarkets
- from health food shops
- by mail order
- via the internet.



# Shopping

## Using your Food and Drink Directory

Our unique Food and Drink Directory lists over 18,000 foods that can be eaten on a gluten-free diet. Our electronic Food and Drink Directory on our website and smartphone app, Gluten-free on the Move, provide information updated in real time, giving you access to the most up to date information to help you shop. What's more, our app has a handy barcode scanner so you can simply scan the item to see if it's listed in our Directory.

We also have an A5 printed version of the Directory that is published every January and is sent to all Members (unless you have previously opted out of receiving one).

You will need to make sure you keep your printed Directory up to date as products can change and new ones are added each month. Monthly updates are available on our website and in our monthly email newsletter.

## Reading labels

If you see any of the following on a food label you know that the food can be included in a gluten-free diet:

- gluten-free
- suitable for coeliacs
- no gluten-containing ingredients
- Crossed Grain symbol.

## Gluten-free

Only foods that contain 20 parts per million (ppm) or less of gluten can be labelled gluten-free. Foods labelled with this term can be eaten by everyone with coeliac disease.

## Suitable for coeliacs

This term can only be used when a food is labelled gluten-free and contains 20 ppm or less of gluten.

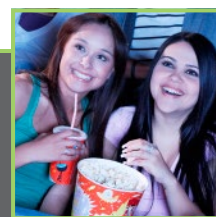
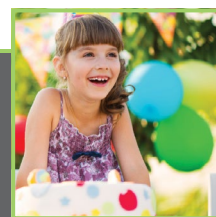
## No gluten-containing ingredients

This statement can be used on foods that are made with ingredients that don't contain gluten and where cross contamination is controlled.

## Crossed Grain symbol

The Crossed Grain symbol can only be used on food that is gluten-free. The symbol is a quick and easy way to help you identify foods and drinks that are safe and is used on a wide variety of gluten-free brands.

The Food and Drink Directory displays the Crossed Grain symbol next to all products that are licensed to display it. New companies are licensed regularly, so don't forget to check the monthly Food and Drink Directory updates for any additions for your paper copy. The Food and Drink Directory on our website and app are updated in real time.







The Crossed Grain symbol can only be used on food that is gluten-free and is a quick and easy reference for you to find food and drink that is safe for you.

### Using the ingredients list

Cereals containing gluten are allergens and so must, by law, always be listed and emphasised on the ingredients list of a prepackaged product. If there is no mention of any grains that contain gluten, such as wheat, barley, rye or oats in the ingredients list, then this means that gluten has not been used in the recipe.

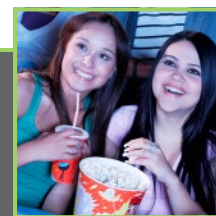
All ingredients used in a food have to be listed in the ingredients list by law, regardless of the amount used. Ingredients are listed in order of weight, starting with the biggest ingredient first. Legislation that applies to foods manufactured from December 2014 means that there is a minimum font size and allergens have to be emphasised in the ingredients list, for example, by using **bold** lettering.

### Checking the ingredients

When checking lists of ingredients it's important to know which ingredients are gluten-free and which contain gluten. A comprehensive ingredients checklist can be found in your Food and Drink Directory or see your Gluten-free Checklist.



Look out for the words wheat, barley, rye or oats in the ingredients list. If they have been used as an ingredient, they must be listed.



## May contain statements

You may see the following statements on some foods:

- may contain traces of gluten
- made on a line handling wheat
- made in a factory also handling wheat.

Manufacturers use these statements to highlight that there is a risk of cross contamination with gluten in the making or packaging of a food. Use of the may contain statement is voluntary and varies. If you see these statements on products that you want to eat then contact Coeliac UK or the manufacturer directly to find out more.



## Prescriptions

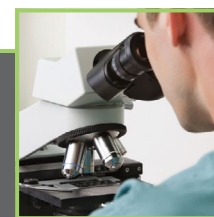
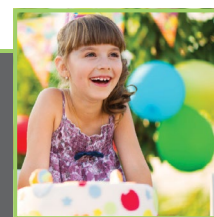
Once you have been diagnosed with coeliac disease, you may be able to get gluten-free staple foods such as bread, flour and flour mixes on prescription.

In most parts of the UK, staple gluten-free foods are available on prescription to help people with coeliac disease follow a strict gluten-free diet. Where prescriptions are provided, the amounts prescribed are based on the assumption that people with coeliac disease will be eating some naturally gluten-free cereal foods, such as rice, and buying some substitute gluten-free products from the supermarket.

Gluten-free prescriptions are free of charge for children under the age of 16 but they are paid for by adults unless they are exempt from prescription charges for another reason. If you do need to pay, you may find that buying a prepayment certificate is good value for money. More details of this can be found at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk) or by calling **0300 330 1341**. Check with your GP, dietitian or pharmacist if you are unsure if you will need a prepayment certificate.

## How do I get prescriptions?

If you live in England or Wales, accessing gluten-free food on prescription and making changes to your prescription works in the same way as prescriptions for medications. The process usually involves you asking your GP for the prescription and then taking it to your pharmacist.







The type and amount of gluten-free food you can access on prescription will depend on where in the UK you live. Check online at [www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies)

If you live in Scotland you will be able to obtain gluten-free products directly from your local pharmacist instead of having to go through your GP, using the Gluten-Free Food Service. You will need to complete a registration form and return it to a community pharmacy of your choice. The pharmacist will be able to register you to use the service and provide more information about the service processes. For more information about the service, please visit [www.coeliac.org.uk/pharmacysupplyschemes](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/pharmacysupplyschemes)

Your dietitian may be able to give you vouchers to send off for sample packs from gluten-free manufacturers to help you decide which products you want on prescription. It's best to try a range of different products so you will know which ones suit you best.

### How much gluten-free food can I get on prescription?

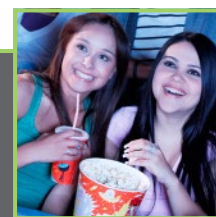
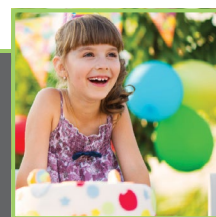
The first table gives you a guide to the recommended amount of gluten-free foods you may get on prescription. This is calculated on a 'unit' basis.

The second table shows some common foods and what makes up a unit. Estimate how much gluten-containing food, such as bread and pasta, you would normally eat in a month to help your GP or dietitian work out how much to prescribe. Check your Food and Drink Directory or the Coeliac UK website for a complete list of gluten-free foods available on prescription.

The tables below represent the National Prescribing Guidelines; however, Clinical Commissioning Groups may have local gluten-free prescribing policies. For more information please see [www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/prescription-policies).

#### Monthly recommendations

Age and gender	Units per month
Child 1 - 3 years	10
Child 4 - 6 years	11
Child 7 - 10 years	13
Child 11 - 14 years	15
Child 15 - 18 years	18
Male 19 - 59 years	18
Male 60 - 74 years	16
Male 75+ years	14
Female 19 - 74 years	14
Female 75+ years	12
Breastfeeding	Add 4
3rd trimester pregnancy	Add 1





**Food chart**

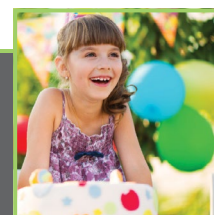
Item	Units
400g bread / rolls / baguettes	1
500g bread mix / flour	2
200g savoury biscuits / crackers / crispbreads	1
250g pasta	1
500g oats	1.5
300g breakfast cereals	1.5
2 pizza bases	1
100-170g xanthan gum	1

## Cooking

Most everyday meals and snacks can be prepared with gluten-free ingredients and Coeliac UK stocks a number of cookbooks with recipes and advice on combinations of flours. As a Member of Coeliac UK you can also access our online Recipe Database for cooking inspiration.

### Simple suggestions to get started

- Use a variety of naturally gluten-free foods and plan meals around them, including:
  - fresh, frozen, canned or juiced fruit and vegetables
  - dried or canned pulses
  - dairy products
  - rice or potatoes (any type)
  - meat, poultry, fish, eggs.
- Ingredients that contain gluten can usually be exchanged for gluten-free alternatives. Use your Food and Drink Directory for suitable options.
- Use gluten-free flours including:
  - rice
  - corn (maize)
  - tapioca (cassava)
  - chickpea (besan, channa, gram flour)
  - buckwheat
  - potato
  - soya
  - millet
  - gluten-free flour mixes.





Ingredients that contain gluten can usually be exchanged for gluten-free alternatives.

- Since the baking qualities of gluten-free flours are different from wheat flour, there may be a period of trial and error.
- You can use xanthan gum in baking. This helps gluten-free flours to behave more like wheat flour. You can find this in some supermarkets.

### Cross contamination

Be careful to avoid cross contamination from foods that contain gluten in the kitchen by:

- washing down surfaces before preparing your food
- using separate toasters or toaster bags for gluten-free bread
- cooking gluten-free foods and foods that contain gluten in separate pans and with separate utensils.



## Eating out

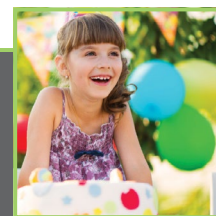
Our tips for eating out gluten-free will help make sure your restaurant meals or hotel stays are enjoyable ones.

### Information to help you choose

The Food Information for Consumers Regulation, introduced in December 2014, means caterers have to provide you with information on any allergens, including cereals containing gluten, in all the dishes they serve. This means if a recipe uses cereals containing gluten in the ingredients, they have to tell you.

Caterers can provide allergen information in written or oral formats. Where the information is not provided written and upfront, there must be clear signposting to where the information can be found. Businesses choosing to provide information orally must ensure there is a written notice, menu, ticket or label that is clearly visible, at the point that you choose your food, to indicate that allergen information is available from a member of staff.

We are working with high street chains, hotels and other caterers through our training and accreditation scheme to drive up choice so you can eat out more easily on your gluten-free diet. Look out for the GF and NGCI (gluten-free and no gluten-containing ingredients) symbols.





Accredited by  
**Coeliac UK**  
training – choice – standards

When you see the Coeliac UK GF logo you know that the restaurant is adhering to the Gluten-free standard. The standard covers all aspects of gluten-free preparation as well as ensuring training is in place. For more information visit [www.coeliac.org.uk/eatingout](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/eatingout).

We want to see a gluten-free option on every high street and for every eventuality. Find out which establishments have taken our accreditation by visiting [www.coeliac.org.uk/GFvenues](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/GFvenues).

### Planning your meal out

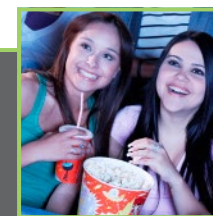
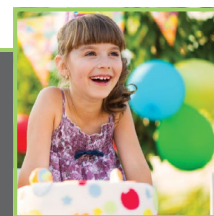
Although caterers have to provide allergen information for dishes they serve, they don't have to offer a gluten-free meal so it is best to call ahead or check their website to see if they offer gluten-free options. If you speak to restaurant staff, explain why you need a gluten-free diet to ensure you don't receive food that contains gluten.

Our Venue Guide has thousands of Member recommended or places we have accredited where you can stay, eat out or takeaway food that is right for your diet. You can access this online or through our smartphone app which has mapping technology to show our accredited venues and take you there.

### Planning overnight breaks

Before booking, ring the venue to check that they can provide food for people with coeliac disease.

You may need to take your own bread and cereal. If you want your bread toasted, ensure they can use a clean grill or a toaster bag as the toaster will also be used for breads that contain gluten. Taking your own supplies such as gluten-free bread and crackers means you will not go hungry if the venue's choice is limited.





## Frequently asked questions

### Can I eat oats?

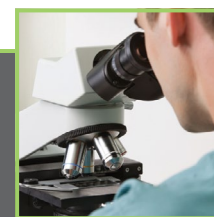
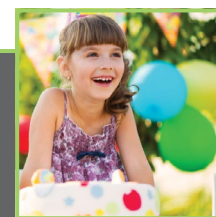
Oats do not contain gluten but they have a similar protein called avenin. Many oats and oat products are contaminated with gluten from wheat, barley and rye so it is important to only eat oats and oat products that are labelled gluten-free. You can find a list of these in your Food and Drink Directory. Gluten-free oats may be introduced to the diet at diagnosis. However, a small percentage of people with coeliac disease are sensitive to gluten-free oats and if you have ongoing symptoms whilst including gluten-free oats in your diet, review their use with your health professional.

### What is gluten-free wheat starch or Codex wheat starch?

This is a specially made wheat starch where the gluten has been removed to a trace level. It is added to some gluten-free foods available on prescription, such as flour and bread, to improve their quality and texture. If Codex or gluten-free wheat starch has been used it must be listed in the ingredients list.

### Can I eat barley malt extract?

Barley malt extract is a flavouring that is often added in small amounts to many brands of breakfast cereals and some other products like chocolate. Foods that contain barley malt extract in small amounts may be included in the gluten-free diet. However, any foods that contain barley malt extract will be labelled as containing barley and you will not be able to tell from the ingredients list how much has been used. If you are unsure whether the food is suitable check your Food and Drink Directory, contact our Helpline on **0333 332 2033** or contact the manufacturer.



“The corner stone of treatment for coeliac disease is a gluten-free diet. It is a true gold standard and the majority of patients clearly feel better and have a new lease of life.

This is because the gluten-free diet allows the small bowel to recover and this results in healing of the villi. By doing this you avoid the complications of coeliac disease such as anaemia, osteoporosis and very rare gut cancers.”

**Professor David S Sanders**, Chair of Coeliac UK's Health Advisory Council

### What if mistakes are made?

Becoming familiar with your new diet after diagnosis is a learning process and it is likely that you'll make some mistakes. The reaction to eating gluten varies from person to person. Symptoms don't tend to happen straight away; they can take hours or up to a couple of days to develop and may last several days, while other people might not get any symptoms. If gluten is eaten by accident, it is unlikely to cause lasting gut damage. The important thing is to stick to your gluten-free diet to prevent further symptoms and help your gut heal.

## What care to expect

The treatment for coeliac disease is a lifelong gluten-free diet. You should be offered a check up, which can be carried out by your GP, consultant or dietitian. If all is going well, you should be reviewed once a year, or sooner if problems arise.

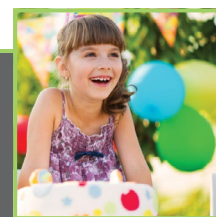
During your review, the following is recommended:

- your weight and height are measured
- your symptoms are reviewed
- your diet and how you're getting on with the gluten-free diet is assessed and it is considered whether you need specialist diet and nutrition advice.

If any concerns are raised in your annual review, you should be referred to a specialist for further assessment. The specialist will be able to consider the need for specific blood tests, a bone scan to test for osteoporosis and the risk of other long term complications and other conditions.

Blood tests that might be carried out include:

- full blood count
- calcium
- ferritin
- folate
- vitamin B12
- coeliac disease antibodies - endomysial (EMA) or tissue transglutaminase (tTG)
- thyroid function tests
- liver function tests.



## Is coeliac disease linked to other health problems?

Early diagnosis of coeliac disease and following a gluten-free diet helps to minimise the risk of long term complications.

### Osteoporosis

Due to decreased absorption of calcium, adults with coeliac disease are at a greater risk of low bone density (osteopenia) and osteoporosis. However, for children with coeliac disease following a gluten-free diet, long term bone health is likely to be unaffected.

There is an increased risk of osteoporosis as we all get older. For women, these risks are greater after the menopause, especially in women who have coeliac disease diagnosed later in life. Bone health will usually improve after starting a gluten-free diet. It is important to stick to the diet to minimise the risk of low bone density and osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is diagnosed by having a Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) scan, which measures bone mineral density. At diagnosis and follow up, the decision for recommendations on DEXA scanning should be carried out on an individual basis, based on assessment from your local healthcare professional. You should speak with your local GP or consultant about your case.

### Autoimmune conditions

Coeliac disease is more common among people with other autoimmune diseases such as Type 1 diabetes and autoimmune thyroid disease.

### Cancer

Long term undiagnosed coeliac disease is associated with a small risk of developing certain types of gut cancer. These types of cancer are very rare and are not associated with childhood. Getting diagnosed and sticking to a gluten-free diet reduces the already low risk of developing this cancer.



People react in different ways to their diagnosis of coeliac disease and starting a gluten-free diet.

### Further help

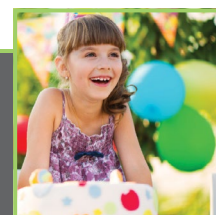
People react in different ways to their diagnosis of coeliac disease and starting a gluten-free diet. For those who have had symptoms for years it may be a relief that, at last, you can start to treat the problem. For those who have not had any symptoms you will usually start to see an improvement in your overall health once you've started a gluten-free diet.

Most children diagnosed with coeliac disease soon adapt to a gluten-free lifestyle. It's important that children fully understand the reasons for changing their diet as peer pressure, especially among teenagers, can become a real challenge. You might find it helpful to seek advice and support from other people or families with coeliac disease.

Coeliac UK has a network of Local Voluntary Support Groups as well as a Member2Member programme targeted to parents and carers. If you are online we have very active communities on Facebook and Twitter. These give you the opportunity to share experiences and seek advice whenever you need it. They can be particularly valuable if you or your family are finding it difficult to adapt to a gluten-free lifestyle.



Join our communities online at [www.facebook.com/CoeliacUK](https://www.facebook.com/CoeliacUK) and on Twitter at @Coeliac\_UK





## Balanced eating

It is important to eat a healthy, balanced diet to provide all the energy and nutrients your body needs. This will help to maintain health and wellbeing throughout life and help reduce the risk of other diseases. In childhood, energy, vitamins and minerals are needed for healthy growth and development.

### Healthy eating for children

A child's diet is not simply about being gluten-free. Childhood is an important time for growth and development and children need a good supply of protein and other nutrients including calcium, iron and vitamins A and D.

Calcium intake is particularly important because it is needed for strong bones and healthy teeth. A diet that is rich in calcium can also minimise the risk of osteoporosis (low bone density) later in life.

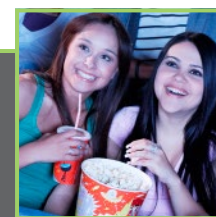
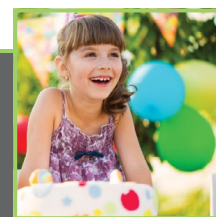
The best sources of calcium are dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yoghurts. All cow's milk contains the same level of calcium, but semi skimmed milk is not recommended before two years of age, and skimmed milk is not suitable for under fives.

Iron is essential for growth and development. Good sources are meat, poultry, fish, green leafy vegetables, pulses (beans, peas, lentils) and dried fruit. Iron is absorbed better from animal sources.

Children's nutritional requirements vary according to their age. For specific advice speak to your dietitian.

### Six simple steps towards a healthy gluten-free diet for children:

- **base your child's meals on starchy carbohydrates** such as rice, potatoes, yams, millet, quinoa and teff, and gluten-free breads and pastas
- **encourage your child to try lots of different types of fruits and vegetables** and aim for at least five portions a day
- **include plenty of milk and dairy foods** such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais as these are a good source of calcium and protein. Provide full fat dairy foods for the under fives, but lower fat versions can be provided for older children
- **aim to give your child one to two portions of meat or fish**, or two to three portions of eggs, nuts and pulses, a day. These foods provide protein and iron
- **limit the amount of sugary foods and drinks** to encourage healthy eating from a young age
- **there is no need to add salt to your child's food.** If you are buying ready made foods always read the label to check how much salt it contains and choose lower salt versions.



Your dietitian is best placed to assess your diet and give you tailored advice to meet your individual needs. Your GP or hospital doctor can arrange a referral to a dietitian.

### Healthy eating for adults

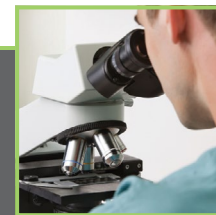
After starting a gluten-free diet, you may find that you put on weight because the lining of the gut heals and absorption of nutrients from food starts to improve. Your appetite may also increase because you are feeling better. Hopefully, any increase in body weight should even out after a few months as your body adapts to the change.

Eating a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight helps reduce the risk of diseases such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Healthy eating recommendations for weight control on a gluten-free diet are no different to those for people without the condition. It is important that you eat a calcium rich diet to maintain healthy bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Finding inspiration for gluten-free food can sometimes be a challenge but we have an online Recipe Database that can help you. Simply log on to the website and search a range of delicious dishes and varied cuisines.

### Seven simple steps towards a healthy gluten-free diet:

- **eat regular meals** based on starchy carbohydrates such as rice, potatoes, yams, millet, quinoa and teff, and gluten-free breads and pastas
- **aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.** Include a variety as they all contain different nutrients and can have different benefits
- **cut down on foods that are high in saturated fat** which is found in animal products including butter, fatty cuts of meat and full fat dairy foods
- **limit your intake of sugary foods and drinks.** Sugar is a main ingredient in sweets, cakes, sweet biscuits and some soft drinks
- **eat plenty of fibre.** Good sources include brown rice, high fibre/multigrain gluten-free breads, pulses, nuts and seeds, fruit and vegetables, and potatoes in their skins
- **cut down on salt.** Use less in cooking and read the label of ready made foods to help you choose lower salt versions
- **avoid drinking too much alcohol.** Women can drink up to two to three units a day and men up to three to four units a day. A unit equals half a pint of cider or gluten-free beer, or one single pub measure of spirits. A 175ml glass of wine equals two units.



## Tips for parents and carers

It's natural for any parent or carer of a child with coeliac disease to be concerned about the possible health or dietary problems their child may encounter when away from home.

Starting school, going to parties and getting involved in more food based activities may seem daunting, but with a little forward planning, there is no reason why these challenges can't be overcome.

### Nursery, playgroup or school

Starting or changing nursery, playgroup or school is a big step for you and your child. Make sure you provide the adults, childminders or teachers who are looking after your child with as much information as possible. This will help to reduce the likelihood of problems and make sure your child adapts well to each new experience.

Before your child starts, make an appointment to see the person in charge, as well as any relevant teaching and catering staff. Let them know that your child has coeliac disease and needs to follow a strict gluten-free diet.

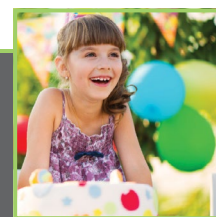
Download our schools' pack at [www.coeliac.org.uk/schools](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/schools) for comprehensive information on managing coeliac disease in school, to share with the school.

You can provide them with information about foods that can be eaten and those that must be avoided. Remember that young children often make mistakes or swap food with other children so it is important that staff are vigilant.

Letting the staff know what symptoms to expect if gluten is eaten is a good idea. Also explain the long term effects of not keeping to a gluten-free diet, such as continued gut damage and poor absorption of nutrients.

### Below is a useful checklist of things to cover with your childcare provider:

- **explain what coeliac disease is** and once a child with coeliac disease follows a strict gluten-free diet they will feel better
- **highlight that coeliac disease is not contagious nor an allergy**, emphasising that they will not suffer a life threatening anaphylactic reaction
- **explain what will happen if your child eats gluten by mistake** so they are aware of what to expect. The most common symptoms include diarrhoea, nausea, tummy ache and wind
- **clarify what foods can be eaten and what foods need to be avoided** – it may be useful to provide them with a copy of this booklet and the Gluten-free Checklist.





Check out our schools' pack for a recipe to make your own play dough at [www.coeliac.org.uk/schools](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/schools)

### Playtime

Gluten has to be eaten to cause symptoms, so using paints, crayons and glues should not be a problem unless your child accidentally eats them. As young children will often put things in their mouth, using materials made with no gluten-containing ingredients is a sensible option.

Preschool children will often make art and instruments with dried pasta. As this may be tempting for small children, it is advisable to use gluten-free pasta or supervise the child.

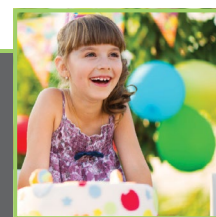
Play dough is not always gluten-free. However, it is easy to make play dough with no gluten-containing ingredients.

### Cookery lessons in primary school

Children often make small cakes or cookies as part of the curriculum and with some forward planning there is no reason why your child cannot take part.

### Cookery lessons in secondary school

Food technology classes should not cause a problem for your child and there is no reason why gluten-free foods cannot be used. Speak to the teacher about using gluten-free ingredients.



### Cross contamination

Before your child takes part in cookery lessons it may be useful to speak to the teacher about cross contamination. Top tips to avoid cross contamination:

- keep all utensils separate during preparation and cooking of gluten-free food
- don't fry gluten-free food in the same oil as foods that contain gluten
- use a clean grill pan, separate toaster or toaster bags when making gluten-free toast
- be careful when preparing gluten-free food in a floury environment.

### School meal times

There are universal free school meal policies for certain school years in schools in England, Scotland and Wales. In addition, free school meals are available to some children depending on individual circumstances, for example the receipt of certain types of benefits.

If a child is entitled to a free school meal, they should not be excluded because they have coeliac disease.

If you want your child to have a lunch which is provided by the nursery or school, speak to the catering staff about suitable choices and providing gluten-free alternatives. Discuss adjustments or alternatives that they could make to their normal weekly menu, and speak to the catering staff about cross contamination.

For packed lunch ideas, check out our website at [www.coeliac.org.uk/packedlunches](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/packedlunches).

Visit [www.coeliac.org.uk/schools](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/schools) to download an information pack on school food provision where you are.

You may prefer to provide your own food which can be heated up or a packed lunch. Make sure your child knows not to swap items in their packed lunch with their friends, in case they swap them for something that contains gluten. Encourage them to double check any food they are unsure of.

To avoid your child feeling different from other youngsters at snack times, you may need to provide gluten-free snacks. Inform staff that these snacks should be stored separately to avoid contact with food that contains gluten.

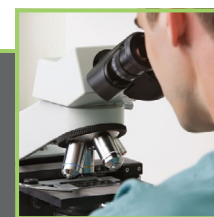
If you feel you're not getting the support that you would like, have a chat with your local dietitian who may be able to speak to the school on your behalf.

### School trips and special occasions

If your child is going on a residential school trip, call ahead and speak to the cook or person providing the meals and talk to the teacher in charge of the trip to explain your child's dietary needs. Pack basic items such as gluten-free bread and crackers so that your child has some emergency supplies. This is recommended for any trip away from home.

### Going to a party

It's worth bearing in mind that the party organiser will probably be very busy on the day, so don't automatically expect them to cater for your child. Discuss your child's dietary requirements with them in advance. If they are unable to cater for your child ask what type of food is being prepared so you can substitute similar gluten-free versions. Perhaps you could take along gluten-free alternatives for everyone to try so your child feels included.



## More information

Our information leaflets are designed to help you manage your gluten-free diet at all stages of your life, while providing additional information about your diet and health.

Please visit our website for a full list and to download your copies. A selection of the leaflets we provide includes:

- Dermatitis herpetiformis
- Osteoporosis
- Lactose intolerance
- Coeliac disease and Type 1 diabetes.

We also have a range of services on our website to help you support your gluten-free lifestyle. Log on to the website and take a look at the:

- Food and Drink Directory
- Recipe Database
- Venue Guide
- Scrapbook, which you can personalise.



And don't forget our app, **Gluten-free on the Move**, which you can download from the App Store and Google Play Store.



0333 332 2033

Call us for more information



[www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)



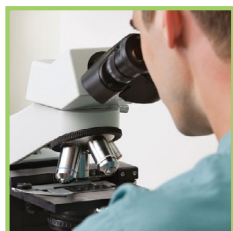
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Being a Member of Coeliac UK gives you, and the people that care about you, the knowledge and confidence to manage your gluten-free diet and to make the right choices for your health. Our proven and trusted expertise will help you understand your condition and guide your decisions on eating safely.



Together as the biggest UK community for coeliac disease, we will improve healthcare and make a gluten-free choice an easy choice.

Coeliac UK - putting the choice back in your life.

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