

LIVING WITH COELIAC DISEASE IN IRELAND...



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Changing to a gluten-free diet can feel daunting at first. This booklet will provide you with all the information you need to get started, helping you to feel more confident about managing your new diet.

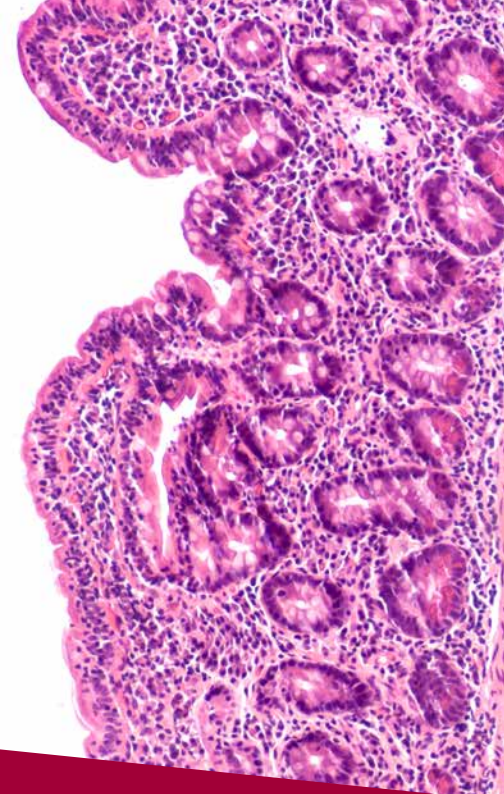
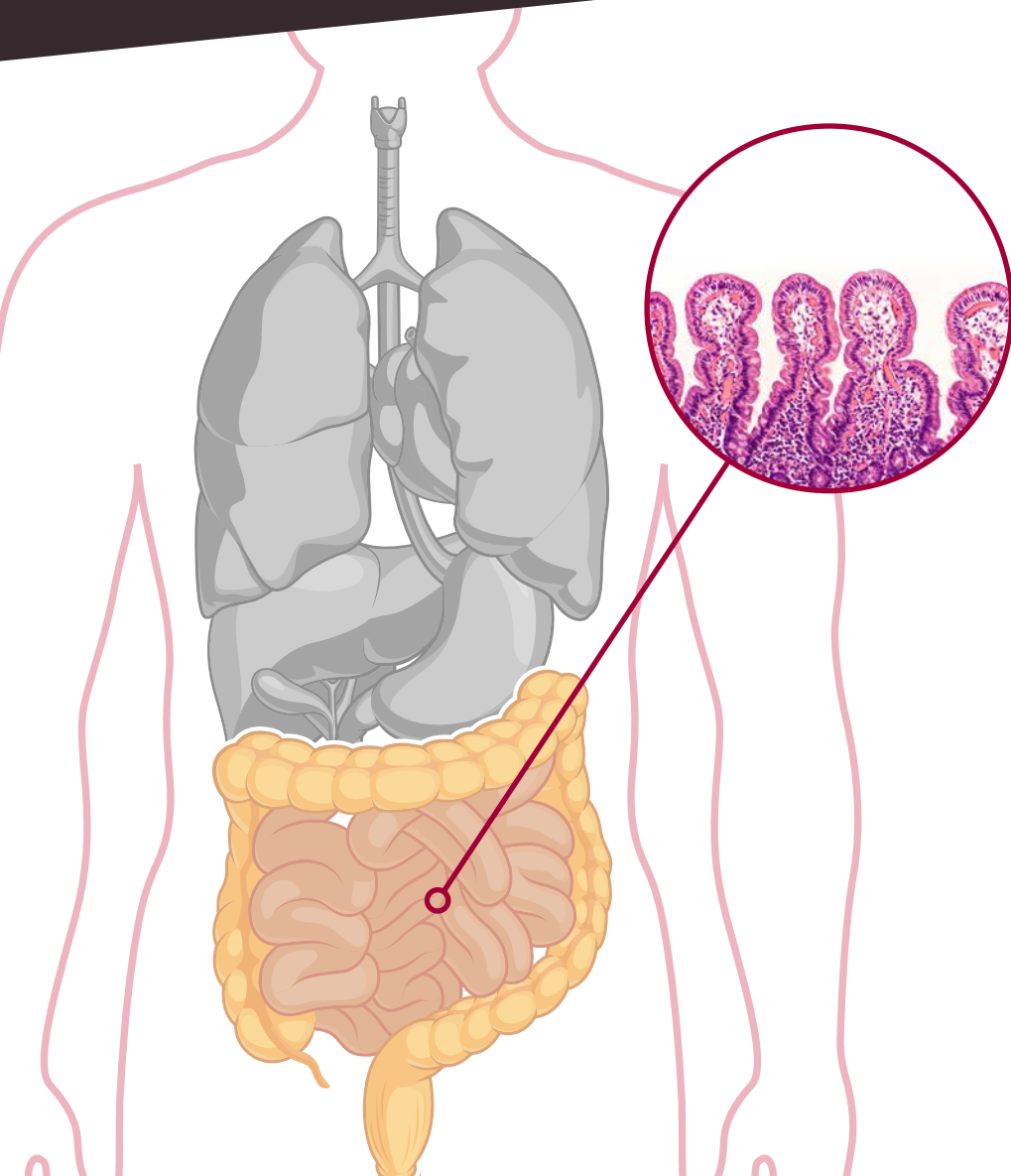
This booklet begins with a short introduction to coeliac disease before taking a more detailed look at a gluten-free diet. It is designed to be used in conjunction with advice from a dietitian following a medical diagnosis of coeliac disease. If you have not been diagnosed by a healthcare professional, please seek advice before commencing a gluten-free diet.

WHAT IS COELIAC DISEASE?

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease caused by a lifelong intolerance to gluten – a protein found in wheat, rye and barley. In a person with coeliac disease, the immune system mistakes gluten in the gut as a 'foreign body' and reacts by causing damage to the delicate lining of the small intestine (small bowel).

HEALTHY VILLI

The lining of the small bowel contains thousands of microscopic folds known as 'villi'. Villi are essential for the absorption of nutrients from food.



DAMAGED VILLI (COELIAC DISEASE)

For someone with coeliac disease, eating food that contains gluten causes damage and inflammation in the small bowel and 'flattening' of the villi, this means that the villi are unable to work as effectively. As a result your body is less able to absorb important nutrients from food.

Around 1 in 100 people has coeliac disease although there are many people who are not yet diagnosed with the condition. Diagnosis can occur at any age and some people may be more at risk of developing the condition, for example, close relatives of people with coeliac disease have a 1 in 10 chance of having the condition themselves. Those with other autoimmune conditions such as type 1 diabetes or thyroid disease also have an increased risk.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms associated with coeliac disease can vary from person to person and can also vary in severity. They may be gut-related or more general and located outside of the gut.

Gut Symptoms	Non-gut symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhoea and/or constipation• Excessive wind• Persistent or unexplained gut symptoms such as nausea or vomiting• Recurrent stomach pain, cramping or bloating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutritional deficiencies such as iron, vitamin B12 and folic acid deficiency• Anaemia• Lethargy• Sudden or unexpected weight loss• Mouth ulcers• Skin rash (dermatitis herpetiformis)• Repeated miscarriages• Neurological (nerve) problems such as ataxia (loss of coordination, poor balance) and peripheral neuropathy (tingling sensation in hands and feet).

There are other symptoms to look out for in babies and young children including faltering growth or a change in growth pattern and irritability.

Symptoms of coeliac disease can be mistaken for other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or wheat intolerance.

A proportion of people with coeliac disease experience no symptoms at all (asymptomatic coeliac disease), however, the damage caused by gluten is still evident within their gut.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed, the first step is to make an appointment with your GP and discuss your concerns. **It is important not to remove gluten from your diet until you are advised to do so by a healthcare professional.**



HOW IS COELIAC DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

The first stage when testing for coeliac disease is a blood test that looks for certain types of gluten-related antibodies within the blood. The specific tests currently used detect levels of tissue transglutaminase (tTG) antibodies or endomysial antibodies (EMA).

If your coeliac blood test is positive, you will be referred to a gut specialist (gastroenterologist) at your local hospital who will perform a procedure known as an 'endoscopy'. This will allow doctors to look at the health of your small bowel and obtain a small sample of bowel cells (a biopsy) which can be examined under a microscope. If your endoscopy and biopsy show signs of the type of gut damage caused by eating gluten, then you will be given a formal diagnosis of coeliac disease.



Children

For children, a gut biopsy may not be necessary in some cases. Guidelines recommend that symptomatic children whose blood tests show a high level of antibodies and who carry the right genes for coeliac disease, may not need to have a biopsy to confirm the diagnosis. Your child's GP should refer them to a paediatric gastroenterologist to make sure the correct tests are carried out. For more child-specific information on coeliac disease and a gluten-free diet, please refer to the 'Coeliac disease and me' leaflet in this series.



IMPORTANT: It is essential that you continue to consume gluten throughout the diagnosis process. Do NOT start a gluten-free diet until your diagnosis has been confirmed by a specialist, even if the results of your blood tests are positive. It is recommended that you consume gluten in at least one meal per day for six weeks prior to undergoing these tests.

WHY DO I NEED A GLUTEN-FREE DIET?

The only known treatment for coeliac disease is a strict, lifelong gluten-free diet. If it is confirmed that you have coeliac disease you will need to start to follow a gluten-free diet immediately. You should start to feel better quickly although some people find it takes up to a year for their symptoms to go altogether. However, it can take longer for the gut damage caused by eating gluten to fully heal. Your gastroenterologist will refer you to an experienced dietitian who will be able to guide you through the changes you need to make to your diet. Your GP may also be able to refer you directly to a dietitian.

If you do have coeliac disease, your gastroenterologist or specialist healthcare professional may run more tests to check the health of your bones and the amounts of vitamins and minerals in your blood. National guidance for the management of coeliac disease recommends that these blood tests are undertaken annually to monitor your nutritional status and health.



COMPLICATIONS OF COELIAC DISEASE

Early diagnosis of coeliac disease and following a gluten-free diet helps to minimise the risk of associated long-term complications as these are predominantly linked to having untreated coeliac disease.

There is a small percentage of people with coeliac disease who do not fully respond to a gluten-free diet which is why it is important to have an annual check up so that this can be addressed.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a thinning of the bones with an increased tendency to fracture, especially in the hips, wrist and spine. As we get older there is an increased risk of low bone mineral density (known as osteopenia) and osteoporosis, and the risks are greater for women after the menopause. Osteoporosis is particularly common in undiagnosed coeliac disease due to decreased absorption of calcium as a result of the damage to the gut lining.

Bone health will usually improve after starting a gluten-free diet and it is important to stick to the diet to minimise the risk of low bone mineral density and osteoporosis. For children with coeliac disease following a gluten-free diet, bone health is unlikely to be affected in the long term. At diagnosis and follow-up, your healthcare professional may recommend a DEXA scan to assess the state of your bone health. You should speak with your GP, consultant or specialist health care professional regarding whether this is relevant for you.

Cancer

People with undiagnosed or untreated coeliac disease have a slightly higher risk of developing certain rare forms of gut cancer. This risk is reduced by closely sticking to a gluten-free diet after being diagnosed with coeliac disease. After 5 years on a strict gluten-free diet, the risk of developing these cancers is no greater than that of someone without coeliac disease; the gluten-free diet must be followed for life.



WHAT IS A GLUTEN-FREE DIET?

Following a gluten-free diet means you must avoid eating all gluten-containing cereals (wheat, rye and barley) and foods made from these, such as breads, crackers, pasta, biscuits, cake, pastry and thickened sauces. Gluten is also found in many foods that you might not expect, including processed meats, ready meals and confectionery. Always check the ingredients list and consult your up-to-date Coeliac Food List (available from the Coeliac Society of Ireland) to confirm whether a packaged food is gluten-free. You can also choose foods that say “gluten-free” on the label. See page 15 for more information.

If you have coeliac disease, it's important to remember that gluten is only a problem if you eat it. So, there is no need to look for items such as creams, toothpaste and similar items that do not contain gluten.





Can I include oats as part of a gluten-free diet?

The main reason that people with coeliac disease should avoid oats and oat-containing products is that oats are commonly contaminated with wheat/rye/barley during production and processing. It is believed that the majority of people with coeliac disease are able to tolerate uncontaminated pure oat products. Suitable oats will be labelled as 'gluten free' as they contain less than 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten, a level that is considered safe for people with coeliac disease.



A small number of people may still react to uncontaminated gluten-free oats so always seek advice from your dietitian if you continue to experience symptoms.

READING FOOD LABELS



How to check labels

All foods sold in Ireland are covered by allergen labelling law. This law states that any allergen contained within a food (however small the amount) should be clearly labelled in bold, highlighted or italic font within the ingredients list for that product. As all gluten-containing cereals are known allergens you can expect these to be clearly labelled if they are present; look out for wheat, rye and barley within the ingredients list and avoid any foods that contain these ingredients. Whilst oats are identified as a gluten-containing cereal in the allergen labelling legislation, uncontaminated, gluten-free oats are considered safe for the majority of people with coeliac disease to eat.

Look out for 'may contain' warnings on packaging, these are intended to alert customers to any potential cross-contamination risks. For example, a food that contains no gluten-containing ingredients but has been produced in a factory where gluten is also handled might carry a 'may contain' or 'made in a factory handling gluten/wheat/rye/barley' warning. Foods with these warnings are not suitable as even small amounts can cause damage to the lining of the gut.

It's important to remember that there is no legal requirement for a food manufacturer to put a "may contain" warning on their products, even if there is a chance of cross-contamination. This is why it is important to use the Coeliac Food List when choosing packaged foods on your gluten free diet.

INGREDIENTS: White Chocolate 82% [Sugar, Cocoa Butter, Whole Milk Powder, Emulsifier (Soya Lecithin), Natural Vanilla Flavour], Dark Chocolate 18% [Cocoa Mass, Sugar, Cocoa Butter, Emulsifier (Soya Lecithin), Natural Vanilla Flavour].* from Cows' Milk.
Dark Chocolate contains Cocoa Solids 55% minimum.
This product does not contain any artificial colours or flavours.
This product is suitable for vegetarians.



Allergy Advice: For allergens, see ingredients in bold.
May contain traces of Nuts, Wheat & Gluten.



HOW ELSE CAN I TELL IF A PRODUCT IS GLUTEN FREE?

The use of the term 'gluten free' on food products is enforced by law. Products bearing this claim must contain less than 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten; this is considered a safe level for free consumption by people with coeliac disease.

You may see this claim on specialist gluten-free products such as breads, flour, crackers and biscuits, as well as processed foods made from naturally gluten-free ingredients such as soups, sauces and sausages. Uncontaminated oats can also use the term gluten-free on pack.

You may also see the statement 'Suitable for coeliacs' or the Crossed Grain symbol on some but not all gluten-free products.

The Coeliac Society of Ireland produces the Gluten Free Food List for members every year. This lists all of the foods that are free from gluten as an ingredient as well as cross contamination.



See the support and advice section on page 46 for more information about joining the Coeliac Society of Ireland and obtaining your copy of the Gluten Free Food List.



Confusing Ingredients

There are some ingredients which are made from a cereal containing gluten where the grain is processed so that the gluten is removed. These ingredients are safe for people with coeliac disease:

- Glucose syrups derived from wheat or barley including dextrose.
- Wheat-based maltodextrins.
- Distilled ingredients made from cereals that contain gluten, for example, alcoholic spirits and malt vinegar.

Other ingredients that can be confusing are:



Codex wheat starch

This is also known as 'gluten-free wheat starch' and is used in some specialist gluten-free products to improve the texture and 'mouth feel' of products. Codex wheat starch and products containing it are safe for people with coeliac disease to eat as the gluten has been removed to a trace level (≤ 20 ppm).



Barley Malt Extract/Flavouring

A number of foods and drinks are made from/include barley or malted barley, for example, malted milk drinks (Horlicks), barley water, barley fruit drinks and beers. These are all unsuitable for a gluten-free diet.

However, some products use barley malt in small amounts as a flavour enhancer, for example, some breakfast cereals, sauces, pickles, chocolate and ready meals. It is often referred to as barley malt extract or barley malt flavouring on the label. If the amount used is sufficiently small, it's possible that the end product may still be safe to eat (≤ 20 ppm). However, some products which contain barley malt flavouring are not suitable for people with coeliac disease as they contain >20 ppm. If you're not sure whether a food product that contains barley malt extract or flavouring is safe to eat, check with the manufacturer or use the Coeliac Society of Ireland's Gluten Free Food List.

At-a-glance guide to check suitability of common ingredients

Not Gluten-Free	Need to Check*	Gluten Free
Barley, bulgar wheat, couscous, Durum wheat, einkorn, emmer, freekah, Khorasan wheat, pearl barley, rye, semolina, spelt, tritcale, wheat	Barley malt extract/ flavouring oats	Almond, amaranth, buckwheat, cassava, chestnut, corn, flax/ linseed, gram flour, hemp, maize, millet, mustard, polenta, potato, pulses, quinoa, rice, sago, sesame, sorghum, soya, tapioca, teff, urd

*Check Coeliac Society of Ireland's Gluten Free Food List



Remember!

There are lots of foods that are naturally gluten free. Foods like milk, cheddar cheese, fresh fish and fruits and vegetables are all naturally gluten free. These foods will not say that they are gluten free but they are still safe for you to eat. You only need to be careful if these foods have had sauces or other ingredients added. If you are not sure, check your Gluten Free Food List, contact the manufacturer or get in touch with the Coeliac Society for help.

TOP TIPS

Cross contamination

Cross contamination is when your gluten-free food comes into contact with gluten, which might not be obvious. For example, your gluten-free toast may come into contact with gluten-containing crumbs which have been left in the toaster.

Unfortunately, even the smallest amount of gluten may cause your symptoms to return in the short term, and, in the longer term, result in damage to the lining of your gut. If you continue to suffer from symptoms once you are on a gluten-free diet, you should make an appointment with your doctor or dietitian to discuss this. One of the main reasons for experiencing continued symptoms is due to accidental cross contamination; however, it is important to be sure that this is the reason.



Avoiding cross contamination at home

Avoid cross contamination at home by following these tips;

Labelling and separating

- Label your containers with a colour or sign if they contain gluten-free food.
- If you have enough space, try using separate storage spaces for gluten-free foods and gluten-containing foods.
- Keep gluten-free foods at the top of the fridge – this ensures that crumbs from gluten-containing foods won't accidentally fall into your gluten-free food.
- Have separate bread boards, bread knives and toasters for non gluten-free and gluten-free use.
- If you don't have a second toaster, use toaster bags, which are available in many supermarkets. Alternatively, use a clean baking tray and toast under the grill.
- If possible, have separate areas for food preparation.
- Use separate butter or margarine tubs as knives can transfer crumbs from gluten-containing bread.
- Use a separate flour sieve and pasta strainer.
- Use separate cooking oil at home to cook gluten-free foods. Remember to check separate cooking oil is used when eating out as well.

Clean and cover!

- Cover the grill pan with foil.
- Wipe surfaces thoroughly after preparing foods containing gluten.
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling gluten-free foods.
- Wash any shared utensils thoroughly after each use (if you cannot use separate utensils for gluten-free and non-gluten free food).



EATING OUT

Allergen labelling law also applies to foods served in restaurants, cafes and delis, as well as other public places that offer food including schools, nurseries and hospitals. Food businesses must be able to provide information for all of the food they serve. If a recipe includes a gluten-containing cereal, you should be provided with this information within the menu (or label), or clearly signposted to where it can be found, for example a menu may simply advise you to speak to a member of staff for more information about food allergens.

- **Be prepared** – keep a selection of gluten-free snacks to hand; in the car, at work, in your handbag/ rucksack.
- **Make extra** – cook additional portions of your evening meal to take to work/ eat the following day, e.g gluten-free pasta/ cooked meat for jacket potatoes or salads.
- **Do your homework** – take time to check restaurant websites for their gluten-free offerings, ring ahead to check what might be suitable... caterers must be able to provide this information by law!
- **Don't be afraid to ask** – if you're not confident that your meal or where it was prepared is gluten-free, ask for more information.

Questions that you might want to ask, include: Have chips been cooked in a clean fryer that has not been used to cook other, gluten-containing foods (e.g. chicken nuggets)? Has gluten free pasta been cooked in fresh, clean water? (some restaurants use the same water for ordinary and gluten free pasta).

Be aware that space in restaurant kitchens can be limited, so they may not always be able to guarantee that there is no cross contamination during cooking.

HEALTHY EATING ON A GLUTEN-FREE DIET

In the early weeks and months of a gluten-free diet, it's normal to put on a few pounds. This is a good sign that your gut is healing and your body is absorbing nutrients again. It's a good idea to talk to your dietitian if you're struggling with your weight.

Maintaining a healthy weight helps you to feel better and also:

- Reduces high blood pressure
- Improves blood sugar control for diabetics
- Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Reduces stress on your joints



WHAT IS A HEALTHY DIET?

A healthy diet is one that includes a well-balanced variety of nutritious, wholesome foods.



Eat Starchy Foods for energy and more

Starchy foods provide essential energy as well as being a good source of fibre, calcium, iron, and some B vitamins. All your meals should be based on this filling food group, which contains less than half the calories per gram than fat. Naturally gluten-free starches include rice and potatoes. Other starches that usually contain gluten, such as bread and pasta, are available in gluten-free versions and help to make it easier to enjoy a healthy, varied diet.





5-7 a day for good health

Eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day will help you get the fibre, vitamins and other essential nutrients you need as part of a healthy diet. Whether you choose to eat them fresh, frozen, dried or canned in juice (rather than syrup), they all count. Just remember that dried fruit is very high in sugar, and potato is included as a starch, and isn't one of your five a day.



What counts as a portion?

Fruit or vegetable 	A portion 
• Melon	• 1 slice
• Dried apricots	• 3
• Banana, apple, orange or pear	• 1 medium-sized fruit
• Plums or kiwi fruit	• 2 small-sized fruit
• Strawberries or grapes	• 1 small handful
• Vegetables	• 3 heaped tablespoons
• Fruit juice	• 150ml

FOODS TO LIMIT



Fried and fatty foods

We all need a certain amount of fat in our daily diet. But some fats are healthier than others. Eating too many saturated fats, like those found in butter, margarine, cheese, and fatty meats like sausages and burgers can make you gain weight and increase your risk of heart disease.

Healthier choices include foods containing mono-unsaturated fats instead, such as olive oil, rapeseed oil, reduced-fat spreads, reduced-fat cheese, and lean meat like chicken (without the skin).

Easy ways to lower your saturated fat intake include grilling instead of frying, and using skimmed and semi-skimmed milk and other reduced-fat dairy foods instead of full-fat options.



Sugar

Sugary foods tend to be high in empty calories that have little nutritional value and the potential to make you gain weight. To satisfy a sweet tooth, it's healthier to choose reduced-sugar foods and drinks, or look for naturally sweetened options.

Remember to check that all of your food choices are gluten-free. The Coeliac Society of Ireland's Food List is a great resource for checking which foods are gluten-free. We've included their helpline number at the back of this booklet.



Salt

A pinch of salt can help bring out the flavour in your food, but too much in your diet can contribute to high blood pressure. Over time, this can lead to heart disease or a stroke.

The recommended salt intake for an adult is no more than 6g a day. Processed foods such as soups, sauces and ready meals are often high in salt. Look for lower-salt options or check the salt content to make healthier choices.

When you're preparing meals at home, you can leave out the salt during cooking and let people add their own amounts at the table. Use plenty of herbs and spices for fuller flavours.



Alcohol

Most drinks that could be classed as a beer contain gluten. This includes lagers, stouts and ales, although gluten-free beers and lagers are becoming more widely available. Check the Coeliac Society of Ireland's Food List for gluten-free brands. Wine, whisky, port, sherry, cider, liqueurs, spirits and Champagne are all gluten-free. Best enjoyed in moderation, of course.

What are the limits for alcohol?

- 17 standard drinks per week for men
- 11 standard drinks per week for women

But remember, this is a limit and not a target! Good advice is to only have 1-2 drinks when you do drink and never more than 6 standard drinks. It is also good to have at least 3 days a week that are alcohol free.

One standard drink:

- ½ pint of beer, stout or cider
- A pub measure of spirits
- 100mls of red or white wine

A bottle of wine that is 12.5% alcohol contains around 7 standard drinks.





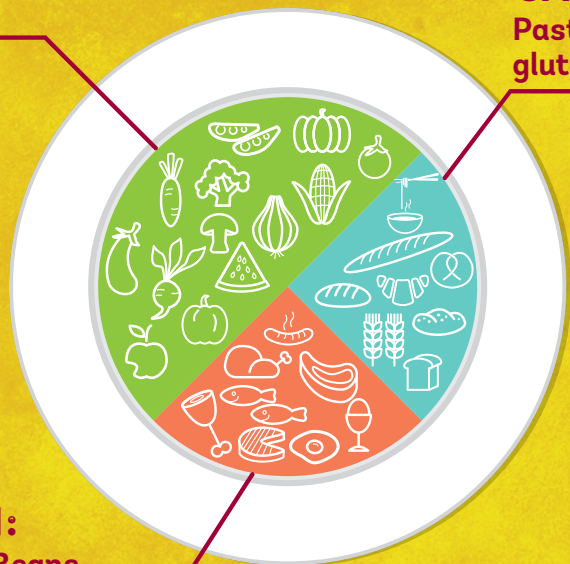
Balanced eating

Balancing your meals is important for good health. You need to have some protein foods (like chicken, meat, fish, eggs or beans) as well as some starchy foods and plenty of vegetables or salad. A good place to start is to balance your plate like this for lunch and dinner:

VEGETABLES & FRUIT

CARBS: Pasta, Potatoes, gluten-free Carbs

PROTEIN: Meat, Fish, Beans



If this is a big change for you, you can start by adding more vegetables and gradually build up to half of your plate. For lunch, you might add a bowl of vegetable soup along with your sandwich or wrap. At dinner add a side salad or add more vegetables to dishes like stews, casseroles and Bolognese.



HEALTHY EATING TIPS

- Choose healthy food that you enjoy
- Keep your diet interesting with lots of variety
- Eating slowly makes it easier to feel when you're full
- Eat foods rich in fibre
- Include plenty of fruit and veg with meals and as snacks
- Keep fatty foods to a minimum
- Sugary foods and drinks are ok as an occasional treat
- Use salt sparingly and enjoy salty foods such as bacon and crisps in moderation

IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS



Fibre

Fibre is an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. It helps to keep your bowels healthy by assisting food and waste products to move through the gut more easily. Wholegrains are the seeds of cereal plants and contain all three parts of the grain. These are higher in fibre, but also vitamins and minerals. Examples of gluten-free wholegrains include millet and quinoa, which can be found in Schär breads.

We need at least 25g of fibre per day to help keep our bowels working as they should. Constipation is a common problem for lots of people with coeliac disease once they start a gluten-free diet. This is mainly due to lower levels of fibre once wheat, rye and barley are off the menu.

Fibre can be found in foods such as fruits and vegetables (especially those with skin and seeds in), dried fruit, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, brown rice, jacket potato skins and high fibre gluten-free breads and cereals.



Simple ways to increase fibre intake

It is important to increase your fibre intake gradually and ensure you drink plenty of water at the same time. We've compiled a list of easy ways to increase your daily fibre intake below:

- Aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Fresh, frozen dried and tinned all count as one of your portions
- Add pulses such as lentils, peas or beans and extra vegetables to soups, stews and curries
- Try gluten-free wholegrains such as quinoa and millet
- Choose fibre versions of gluten-free breads, rolls, pasta and crackers
- Choose high-fibre snacks throughout the day such as a handful of dried fruit, seeds or high-fibre crackers





Iron is an important mineral which has many different roles in the body. One of its main roles is to make haemoglobin, the red pigment in blood which is needed to transport oxygen around the body. Iron also plays an essential role in maintaining a healthy immune system.

Iron deficiency is common in people with undiagnosed and untreated coeliac disease as the body isn't able to absorb iron very well following damage to the gut lining. Approximately 25% of adults are anaemic when first diagnosed with coeliac disease.

There are two types of iron that can be found in the diet:

- **Haem iron**– this is more readily absorbed by the body and can be found in red meat
- **Non-haem iron**– this is less readily absorbed by the body and is found in plant foods such as green, leafy vegetables, beans, pulses and dried fruit.

Non-haem iron absorption can be reduced by tannins (found in tea) and polyphenols (found in coffee). Foods rich in vitamin C may improve absorption e.g. fruit juice, fresh, green vegetables, potatoes and citrus fruits.

Foods that are a good source of iron are listed below. Aim to have at least two foods a day from this list:

- Red meat (Beef, lamb, pork). Although it is best to keep red meat to 3 times per week.
- Beans and lentils – chickpeas, kidney beans, red and brown lentils etc.
- Eggs
- Sardines
- Chicken and turkey legs (there is not a lot of iron in chicken or turkey breast)
- Spinach (great in salads as well as curries, pasta and as a side dish)
- Kale (try it lightly boiled, stir fry's or as kale crisps. Also works well in smoothies)
- Seeds including pumpkin and sesame seeds
- Nuts including almonds and hazelnuts
- Gluten-free black pudding
- Mussels
- Dried fruit like raisins

Look for gluten-free foods that are fortified with iron.







Calcium

Calcium is an important nutrient needed to ensure you have strong bones, helping to reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

It is important for everyone to consume their recommended allowance of calcium. However, it is even more important for those with coeliac disease as there is a higher requirement for this nutrient than for the general population. This is because the damage to the lining of the gut in undiagnosed or untreated coeliac disease leads to less calcium being absorbed from the diet. It is recommended that adults with coeliac disease have at least 1000mg per day. A 200ml glass of milk or calcium-fortified plant-based alternative contains approximately 240mg calcium.

Although green vegetables do contain some calcium, there is not enough for them to count towards your calcium for the day. It is also harder for your body to absorb the calcium in green vegetables. Did you know you would have to eat 16 servings of broccoli everyday to get the calcium you need? You can certainly add green vegetables to meals to increase your calcium but you do need to include 3-4 daily servings of milk, cheese, yogurt, or the other foods listed in the table below. Remember that butter and cream do not contain calcium. If you are lactose intolerant you can use lactose free milk. Cheese is also quite low in lactose and suitable for most people who are lactose free. If you don't use dairy, then you need to include three servings of calcium fortified soya milk or yoghurt each day. If you struggle to eat all of your calcium, talk to your dietitian for advice.

Food		1 serving	
• Milk		• 200mls	
• Calcium fortified plant milks (e.g. calcium fortified soya milk)		• 200mls	
• Yoghurt		• 125g (standard pot)	
• Hard cheese (like cheddar)		• 30g (2 “thumbs”)	
• Tinned sardines (eaten with bones)		• 90g tin	
• Tinned salmon (eaten with bones)		• 100g tin	
• Tofu		• 100g	
• Almonds		• 90g	

Tips to help achieve a good calcium intake:

- Add milk or yoghurt to your gluten-free breakfast cereal
- Add green vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, curly kale, watercress and green beans to your main meals
- Include dried fruit such as figs, seeds and nuts as gluten-free snacks
- Use tinned fish with bones, such as sardines or pilchards, and include on toast
- Check non-dairy sources of calcium such as plant-based milks are fortified with calcium

Vitamin D helps the body to absorb calcium from the diet. Most of the vitamin D is made by the action of sunlight on our skin. Foods rich in vitamin D include oily fish, eggs and fortified spreads and breakfast cereals. However, it is not possible to achieve an adequate intake of vitamin D from diet alone. Children over 1 and adults require 10 micrograms of vitamin D per day. Adults over 65 years require 15 micrograms per day. People with coeliac disease need to take a supplement of vitamin D all year round. Aim to take 10 micrograms of vitamin D everyday (or 15 micrograms if you are aged over 65). Talk to your dietitian for advice.



TAX BACK ON GLUTEN-FREE FOODS

Gluten free foods are no longer available on prescription in Ireland, but you can claim tax back on the gluten-free foods you buy at the supermarket. Keep your receipts throughout the year and contact www.revenue.ie to apply. If you need any help, contact the Coeliac Society of Ireland for advice.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

● Am I at risk of nutritional deficiencies when I switch to a gluten-free diet?

No, not necessarily – if you follow a balanced diet, you shouldn't miss out on essential nutrients. Advice from a dietitian can help to ensure your diet is balanced with specific advice on important nutrients. This leaflet contains lots of useful tips and advice for healthy eating on a gluten-free diet.

● What if I eat gluten by mistake?

Following a gluten-free diet is a learning curve and it can be quite common for mistakes to occur, especially when starting out on a gluten-free diet. If this happens it is likely that the symptoms you experienced before diagnosis may reappear. The effect of eating gluten will vary from person to person and depends on the amount of gluten eaten, how sensitive you are and how long you have followed a gluten-free diet. Whilst the occasional mistake is unlikely to cause any lasting damage to the lining of the gut it is important to try to minimise the risk of making mistakes in the future as repeated gluten exposure is likely to cause long-term health consequences.

● How long do I have to wait after my diagnosis before feeling better?

Starting a gluten-free diet following a diagnosis of coeliac disease means you will begin to feel better and your gut will start to heal. Some people will see an improvement in their symptoms within a few days of starting a gluten-free diet, whereas in others it may take longer. It can take anywhere between 6 months and 5 years for the gut to fully heal and it is thought that this is dependent on age at diagnosis and also the severity of the gut damage. If you are concerned that your symptoms are not improving despite following a gluten-free diet, make an appointment with your GP to discuss your concerns.

● If I have coeliac disease, will my children have it?

Coeliac disease does run in families but is not necessarily inherited. If you have coeliac disease, there is roughly a 1 in 10 chance of your children or other close family members (e.g parents, siblings) also developing the condition. It is recommended that first degree family members are also tested for coeliac disease. This includes children, sisters, brothers and parents. For more information and advice, contact the Coeliac Society of Ireland.

● Can I eat oats?

Oats can offer a nutritious addition to a gluten-free diet as well as adding variety. They are rich in soluble fibre which can help maintain a healthy gut and may help to keep blood sugars stable. Most people with coeliac disease can safely eat gluten-free, uncontaminated oats. The issue with standard oats is that they are produced in the same place as gluten-containing cereals such as wheat, rye and barley, which makes them unsafe as they may become contaminated during milling and processing. Around 5% of people with coeliac disease will be sensitive to gluten free oats. If you do eat oats and are still have symptoms, speak to your dietitian for advice or contact the Coeliac Society of Ireland.

● Are gluten-free foods high in fat and sugar?

Gluten-free foods are often criticised for being higher in fat and sugar than their mainstream counterparts, however, there is huge variation between the different brands and types of gluten-free foods available on the market. Schär is committed to producing products that contain only the highest quality raw ingredients. We continually benchmark our products' nutritional values against mainstream equivalents to ensure comparability. Moreover, many of our products are high in fibre and low in saturated fat.



SCHÄR

is a gluten-free food manufacturer, who is committed to supporting those with special dietary needs. With decades of experience and a team of expert food technologists and health professionals, the Schär range offers a wide selection of tasty and high-quality ambient and frozen products and is available in leading retailers. Schär also provides a range of services and resources including practical tips, information and gluten-free recipes to support those on a gluten-free diet. Further information on Schär products, resources and a gluten-free diet can be found on the website. There is also a Schär app which helps you find gluten-free options on the go including stores, restaurants and hotels as well as restaurant cards in different languages for travelling abroad.

Careline: 0800 161 5838

share@schar.co.uk

WWW.SCHAER.COM/EN-UK

SUPPORT & ADVICE



Coeliac Society of Ireland

The Coeliac Society of Ireland is a national charity for people who need to live without gluten in their diet due to coeliac disease or other medical conditions. We also support the families of people living gluten free. We provide a range of services to our members to help manage their health including a dedicated dietitian clinic where members can get expert advice on managing a gluten-free diet. We offer advice, information and assistance via our website and helpline as well as actively campaigning for better services for our members from health, hospitality and other relevant sectors. We conduct research into coeliac disease and how it impacts on those living gluten free and develop the annual Gluten Free Food List to help our members make safe dietary choices. We educate health professionals on coeliac disease working with the ICGP and the INDI to help ensure our members get the best care. Our Mission is to make Ireland the best place to live gluten free.

e: info@coeliac.ie

www.coeliac.ie



NOTES

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NOTES

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, and the page is completely blank except for the lines themselves.



Leaflet produced with the editorial support of Sarah Keogh,
Consultant Dietitian, Coeliac Society of Ireland.