

Coeliac Disease

Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

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لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

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إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
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What is Coeliac Disease?

Coeliac disease is a condition where your immune system attacks your own tissues when you eat gluten. This damages your gut (small intestine) so your body cannot properly take in nutrients. Coeliac disease can cause a range of symptoms, including diarrhoea, abdominal pain and bloating.

Coeliac disease is caused by an adverse reaction to gluten, is found in 3 types of cereal:

- Wheat
- Barley
- Rye

Gluten is found in any food that contains those cereals, including:

- Pasta
- Cakes
- Breakfast cereal
- Most types of bread
- Certain types of sauces
- Some Ready meals

Notes

Gluten-free foods:

Your child will be referred to a specialist dietician who can discuss the gluten-free diet with you in detail, and help you plan healthy meals that are suitable.

Lots of foods are naturally gluten free and your child will be able to eat these freely.

These include:

- Rice
- Potatoes
- Corn (Maize)
- Meat
- Eggs
- Fish
- Cheese
- Milk
- Most yoghurts
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Pulses (Peas, Beans and lentils)

Supermarkets now offer 'free-from' ranges of foods, most of which will be gluten free. The dietician will be able to advise you on these products and how to get hold of them.

Once your child has been gluten-free for a while, their body will begin absorbing the nutrients that they need from their diet again. It can take the small intestine around three to six months to recover fully.

Your child should start feeling better within a few weeks but this can vary. Your child will need to follow a gluten-free diet for life. Some children need to cut oats out of their diet too.

You can use www.coeliac.org.uk for more help or advice.

How common is Coeliac Disease?

Coeliac disease is very common and affects 1 in 100 people. However only 36% who have the condition have been diagnosed which means there are currently nearly half a million people who have coeliac disease but do not yet know.

If a first degree family member (such as mother, father, sister or brother) has the condition then the chances of having it increase to one in ten.

Who is most likely to get it?

Coeliac disease does run in families. Research shows that a child has a 1 in 10 chance of developing coeliac disease if a close family member has it. It can develop at any age.

Sometimes, an infant may show signs of coeliac disease after weaning but it can develop in later childhood and adulthood.

What are the signs and symptoms?

These vary – some children are mildly affected, while others experience more severe symptoms that can make life more difficult.

Signs and symptoms can include:

- Diarrhoea
- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Weight loss (not always)
- Abdominal pain
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Bloating
- Excessive wind
- Itchy rash

As a result of food being poorly absorbed, a child's growth and weight can be affected. Anaemia can also be a problem because a child is not able to absorb enough dietary iron from their food.

Lack of calcium can also be a problem as not enough will be absorbed from an early age.

Other symptoms in young children include irritability and muscle wasting in the arms and legs. Symptoms vary in older children, but can include poor growth and frequent mouth ulcers.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will look at your child's symptoms and take a blood test. This blood test checks for a specific type of antibody made by the body in response to eating gluten.

It is important **not** to omit gluten from your child's diet before the test otherwise these antibodies will be difficult to detect. Stay on a normal gluten containing diet before all investigations are carried out.

The GP may then refer your child to a paediatric gastroenterologist (doctor specialising in children's gut problems). To confirm the diagnosis, a child will need a gut biopsy.

This involves passing an endoscope (a thin flexible tube with a light at the end) through the mouth, into the stomach, then into the small intestine. The doctor can look down the tube, see the gut lining clearly and collect small samples of gut lining (biopsies).

These samples are examined in the laboratory to check for abnormalities consistent with coeliac disease. In young children, this test is usually carried out under a general anaesthetic.