



**Press Release**

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## **NEW RESEARCH ANNOUNCES GROWTH IN RATES OF COELIAC DISEASE IN CHILDREN**

New research published today, 23 January 2015, states the number of young children diagnosed with coeliac disease in the UK has almost tripled over the past 20 years.

The research by University of Nottingham was jointly funded by Coeliac UK, the national Charity for people with coeliac disease and CORE, a charity fighting gut and liver disease and was published online in *Archives of Disease in Childhood* see: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25613988>

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease where the body's immune system reacts to gluten from wheat, barley and rye, making the body attack itself. There is no cure and no medication and the only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet for life. Coeliac disease is a serious illness.

1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease, however, only 24% of those with the condition are currently diagnosed.

The researchers assessed data from The Health Improvement Network (THIN) which showed that diagnoses among children older than 2 years almost tripled in the space of 20 years. The diagnosis rate for coeliac disease in 2008-12 among children was 75% higher than it was in 1993-97.

Sarah Sleet, Chief Executive of Coeliac UK said: "This research is very useful in providing a much better understanding of how many children have been diagnosed with coeliac disease, and gives us an insight on where we should be driving resources to increase awareness of coeliac disease and need for diagnosis."

Coeliac UK is launching a two year diagnosis campaign kicking off in May this year to find the missing half a million people in the UK who are currently undiagnosed.

The researchers say the rise in new cases among children is likely to be the result of better awareness of coeliac disease, as well as the means to diagnose it.

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For more information or interviews please contact  
Kate Newman [kate.newman@coeliac.org.uk](mailto:kate.newman@coeliac.org.uk) or tel: 07952071014

**Notes to editor**

- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- A wide range of case studies are available on request from Coeliac UK.
- Gluten is a protein found in wheat (including spelt), rye and barley. Some people are also sensitive to oats. Obvious sources of gluten include breads, pastas, flours, cereals, cakes and biscuits. It is often used as an ingredient in many favourite foods such as fish fingers, sausages, gravies, sauces and soy sauce.
- Average time to diagnosis is 13 years
- 1 in 4 people diagnosed with coeliac disease had previously been diagnosed with IBS
- Coeliac UK has a Helpline on 0845 305 2060 and further information can be found at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)