



SCHOOL PACK

Welcome

Welcome to your coeliac disease in school information pack. The aim of this pack is to provide you with information to allow your child's condition to be managed effectively in school. This pack includes information for you as a parent/carer, your child and for the school.

Free school meals are not universal but available for some children. To find out if your child is eligible for a free school meal please visit:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/nutrition-and-school-lunches

This pack provides information on what you, as a parent/carer, should expect from your child's school and the things you can do to help ensure the right arrangements are in place for your child.

This pack contains:

- Care to expect at school
- Meeting with the school
- School activities
- An information card (to print).

About Coeliac UK

Coeliac UK is the charity for everyone living without gluten. We provide the independent, trustworthy advice and support people need to live well, gluten free.

coeliacuk
live well **gluten free**

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A charity registered in England and Wales (1048167) and in Scotland (SC039804) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (3068044).

www.coeliac.org.uk

Care to expect at school

If your child is entitled to a free school meal they should not be excluded due to having coeliac disease.

Schools and caterers should work closely with parents to support children with medically verified allergies or intolerances and coeliac disease (which is an autoimmune disease triggered by eating gluten). Head teachers and school governors are best placed to make decisions in the case of pupils who have special dietary requirements, taking into account local circumstances.

Children with coeliac disease should not be excluded from any activity at school, including school meals with their peers.

Meeting with the school

If your child has recently been diagnosed with coeliac disease or your child is about to start school, contact their school to discuss how the condition will be managed.

Arranging a meeting with the school is a good way to ensure that everyone involved in the care of your child knows about their needs and the importance of a gluten free diet for your child.

Young children may make mistakes or swap food with other children so it is important that supervising staff are aware of the importance of a gluten free diet for children with coeliac disease. Meeting with the school catering team, nurse and teachers can be really useful to discuss any concerns that you or the team may have. Your child's

class/form teacher needs to be made aware of their condition and may be able to help coordinate a meeting with the catering team and school nurse.

To discuss with the class/form teacher

Explain what coeliac disease is and that as long as a child with coeliac disease follows a strict gluten free diet they should not suffer any symptoms.

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 print out of this pack and the Gluten free Checklist which is available from the Coeliac UK website.

To discuss with the catering team

Discuss adjustments they could make to the normal weekly menu to provide gluten free choices.

Suggest alternative meals for those days where adjustments are not possible.

Ensure that the catering team understand how to read labels which will enable them to identify whether a packaged food contains

gluten or not. Information on reading labels can be found at www.coeliac.org.uk/labels.

Information like Coeliac UK's Gluten free Checklist, Guide to Common Grains and information available on the Coeliac UK website may also be useful: www.coeliac.org.uk/gdiet.

The Food Industry Professionals section of Coeliac UK's website is designed to help people to cater for those with coeliac disease and includes links to a catering training module. Ask the school catering team to take a look at www.coeliac.org.uk/food.

To discuss with the school nurse

Most schools will have at least one child with coeliac disease, but just in case, explain what the condition is and that as long as a child follows a strict gluten free diet they should not suffer any symptoms.

Explain that the reaction to eating gluten varies. 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 children might not get any symptoms. Explain what will happen if your child eats gluten by mistake so they are aware of what to expect.

Occasionally, children will accidentally eat something that contains gluten. If gluten is eaten by accident, it is unlikely to cause lasting gut damage. The important thing is to make sure that your child gets back onto their gluten free diet to prevent further

symptoms and to prevent any long term damage.

If your child has symptoms like diarrhoea it is important to make sure that they do not become dehydrated. You should let the teacher know this.

School activities

School trips

Children should not be excluded from school trips because they have coeliac disease. Speak to your child's teacher about the meals and snacks provided. If the trip involves external caterers, teachers can provide copies of the information in this pack to catering departments.

Children's birthdays and celebrations

To avoid your child feeling different or excluded at snack times, you may need to provide gluten free snacks. Inform staff that these snacks should be stored separately to avoid contact with foods containing gluten. If children bring in sweets or snacks for their birthdays or other celebrations it is a good idea to provide a gluten free alternative that can be provided for your child.

Cookery classes

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. Food technology classes should not cause a problem for your child and there is no reason why gluten free foods cannot be



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prepared. 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: n keep utensils separate during preparation and cooking of gluten free food n don't fry gluten free food in the same oil as foods that contain gluten n use a clean grill pan, separate toaster or toaster bags when making gluten free toast n separate the preparation of gluten free foods from gluten containing foods when wheat flour is being used.

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 without gluten 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 Doh™ is not always gluten free. However, it is easy to make play dough without using gluten. A gluten free recipe is available on the Coeliac UK website at:

www.coeliac.org.uk.

Further Information

You can find more information on a wealth of topics on the Coeliac UK website:

About coeliac disease:

www.coeliac.org.uk/coeliac-disease

The gluten free diet:

www.coeliac.org.uk/gfdiet

Caring for children with coeliac disease:

www.coeliac.org.uk/children

Catering gluten free:

www.coeliac.org.uk/catering

Coeliac UK training:

www.coeliac.org.uk/courses

Further information about school food in Northern Ireland:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/nutrition-and-school-lunches.

Information card

My name is:

I have coeliac disease. This means I can't eat **wheat, rye, barley or oats**.

I can eat fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk, eggs, cheese, rice, potatoes, pulses and nuts.

Ask:

For more information about what I can and can't eat.

