

# SCHOOL PACK

### Croeso

Welcome to your coeliac disease in school information pack. The aim of this pack is to provide you with information to effectively manage the needs of children in your care who have coeliac disease. This pack includes information for teachers, catering staff and school nurses.

This guide will help you to support pupils with coeliac disease when they are at school. The pack includes information for teachers, catering staff and school nurses.

This pack contains:

- About coeliac disease
- The gluten free diet
- School activities
- Further information.

### About Coeliac UK

Coeliac UK is the charity for everyone living without gluten. We carry out research, we campaign for a fairer deal, and we provide independent, trustworthy advice and support. And we do it all so that one day, no-one's life will be limited by gluten.

**coeliac uk**  
live well **gluten free**

☎ 0333 332 2033

📘 facebook.com/CoeliacUK

🐦 @Coeliac\_UK

Registered office Coeliac UK,  
3rd Floor Apollo Centre,  
Desborough Road, High  
Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2QW.

Tel: 01494 437278

Fax: 01494 474349

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

## What your school should do

Where there is an entitlement to a free school breakfast or lunch, children should not be excluded due to having coeliac disease.

One in 100 children has coeliac disease. A gluten free diet is the medical treatment for children with coeliac disease, and as such, is essential for supporting children with this condition.

Schools and caterers should work closely with parents to support children with medically verified allergies or intolerances and coeliac disease (which is an autoimmune condition). 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.

## About coeliac disease

What is coeliac disease?

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

Around one in 100 children has coeliac disease, although many children are not yet diagnosed with the condition. Coeliac disease does run in families but not in a predictable way. One in 10 close relatives of people with coeliac disease will have the condition.

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. More females are diagnosed than males.

What happens in coeliac disease?

When someone with coeliac disease eats food containing 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. Those 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.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms vary from person to person and don't tend to happen straight away. They can take hours or up to a couple of days to develop and can last several days, while other children might not have any obvious or immediate symptoms. The classic symptoms of coeliac disease in children include:

- diarrhoea
- vomiting
- constipation
- abdominal distension
- prolonged fatigue
- faltering growth.

## The gluten free diet

### What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein in the grains wheat, barley and rye. Some people with coeliac disease may also be sensitive to oats. Gluten is commonly found in foods such as bread, breakfast cereals, biscuits, pasta and cakes but it is also in foods that you may not expect, such as some sauces, ready meals and sausages. Coeliac UK's Gluten free Checklist, available on the Coeliac UK website, is a guide to the types of foods that can be eaten, those that can't and those that need to be checked.

### What can those with coeliac disease 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, breakfast cereals, pasta and biscuits are also available from most catering suppliers and in the Free From range in supermarkets.

### 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
- the Crossed Grain symbol.

Cereals that contain gluten must, by law, always be listed on the ingredients list of a pre-packaged product. If there is no mention of any grains that contain gluten, such as wheat, barley or rye in the ingredients list, then this means that gluten has not been used in the recipe.

### 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. Coeliac UK does not recommend caterers use foods with these warnings.

### Tips for caterers

Use a variety of naturally gluten free foods and plan meals around them, such as:

- meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- fresh, frozen, canned or juiced fruit and vegetables
- dried or canned pulses
- dairy products
- rice or potatoes.

Ingredients that contain gluten can usually be exchanged for gluten free alternatives. Use gluten free flours such as:

- rice
- corn (maize)
- tapioca (cassava)
- chickpea (besan, channa, gram flour)
- buckwheat
- potato
- soya
- millet
- gluten free flour mixes.

## Cross contamination

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

- washing down surfaces before preparing gluten free food
- using separate toasters or toaster bags for gluten free bread
- cooking gluten free foods in separate dishes and with separate utensils to those used for gluten containing foods.

Catering training Coeliac UK provides a range of training options for caterers covering the following information:

- choosing and using the right ingredients
- storage, goods inwards and ingredients management
- how to cater within the law on gluten free
- training your staff
- communicating so those with coeliac disease feel confident you understand their needs.

For more information, visit:

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

## School activities

### School trips

Children should not be excluded from school trips because they have coeliac disease. If food is provided as part of a school activity, whether a day trip or longer, you must make reasonable efforts to provide gluten free food for children with coeliac disease. Speak to the child's family about their requirements. Parents can often provide information and tips on how to cater for their child.

## Children's birthdays and celebrations

To avoid children feeling different or excluded at snack times, a gluten free equivalent should be made available. Ensure that these snacks are stored separately to avoid contact with foods containing gluten. If children bring in sweets or snacks for their birthdays or other celebrations, check their suitability and if they are not gluten free, it is a good idea to provide a gluten free alternative. Speak to the parents who are often happy to provide these.

### Cookery classes

There is no reason why children cannot take part in cookery or food technology classes. Children often make small cakes or cookies as part of the curriculum and with some forward planning there is no reason why children with coeliac disease cannot take part. Check the ingredients and provide gluten free where applicable or speak to the child's parents who may be able to provide substitute ingredients or suggest a modified recipe. It is important to avoid cross contamination during cookery lessons.

### Playtime

Gluten has to be eaten to cause symptoms, so using paints, crayons and glues should not be a problem unless a child with coeliac disease 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](http://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](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/coeliac-disease)

The gluten free diet:

[www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle):

Caring for children with coeliac disease:

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

Catering gluten free:

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

Coeliac UK training:

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

Further information about school food in Wales:

[www.wales.gov.uk/schools](http://www.wales.gov.uk/schools)

## Contact details for parent/carer

Fill out this section to retain for reference

Child's name:

Parent/carer name:

Relationship:

Telephone number:



Coeliac UK, 3rd Floor, Apollo Centre,  
Desborough Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 2QW  
T: 01494 437278 F: 01494 474349 [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)

