

Press release

Date: 10 July 2018

Yorkshire man's fundraising feats to boost coeliac disease awareness

Carl Schumacher 39, from Market Weighton, Yorkshire is preparing for his latest fundraising feats in aid of the national charity Coeliac UK, following his three year old daughter, Jessica's diagnosis of coeliac disease.

"Jessica was diagnosed with coeliac disease when she was 18 months old. She spent a lot of time in and out of hospital, vomited most days and couldn't keep her food down. She lost a lot of weight and went from being a child who was full of energy and was just about to start walking to a child that sat down and didn't move all day," Carl said.

"I am very happy to do my bit to raise awareness of coeliac disease and if it means that just one more person thinks that it's worth getting tested as a result then that would be fantastic!," he continued.

Carl has already run the Virgin London Marathon and the Copenhagen Marathon this year in aid of Coeliac UK and is now preparing for his next challenge which starts on 5 August, when Carl will be cycling from Market Weighton to Edinburgh. A total of 320 miles in four days, clocking up 80 miles a day.

For his final challenge which will take place in September, he will be walking the 15 miles from Robin Hoods Bay to Scarborough along with eight work colleagues from Natwest Mentor.

Carl said: "The cycle ride is what I am fearing and looking forward to most. I will be doing the event on my own and is massively out of my comfort zone as I only cycle about 5 miles a week. At the same time I am very excited about the people that I meet along the way and the coastlines that I'll get to explore. I am also looking forward to finishing outside Edinburgh Castle."

Coeliac UK is the national charity for people who need to live gluten free and is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. Coeliac disease is a serious autoimmune condition caused by a reaction to gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. People diagnosed with coeliac disease must maintain a strict gluten free diet for the rest of their life if they are to avoid very serious complications such as osteoporosis, infertility, neurological conditions and although rare, small bowel cancer.

One in hundred people in the UK has coeliac disease but around half a million people in the UK are currently undiagnosed. It still takes an astonishing 13 years on average for a person to be diagnosed.

Although many people present with a range of [symptoms](#) including those that are gut related, other symptoms include mouth ulcers, anaemia, repeated miscarriages and neurological problems.

Coeliac UK Chief Executive Sarah Sleet said, "We are so thankful for the support of people like Carl who are helping us raise much needed awareness of coeliac disease and the need for early diagnosis and we wish him luck for his forthcoming challenges".

The charity urges anyone that has ongoing symptoms to visit their GP and request a blood test for coeliac disease, or for more information visit the charity's website at www.coeliac.org.uk or ring their helpful team on 0333 332 2033. Anyone considering testing must not remove gluten from their diet prior to testing as this could lead to a false negative result.

To sponsor Carl, please visit:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/CarlSchumacher1> for the cycling challenge and

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-buck2> for the walk

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Coeliac UK is the national charity for people who need to live without gluten, whether due to coeliac disease or another medical condition requiring a gluten free diet.
- The charity was launched in 1968 and is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year
- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, mouth ulcers, fatigue and anaemia.
- In undiagnosed, untreated coeliac disease there is a greater risk of complications including anaemia, osteoporosis, neurological conditions such as gluten ataxia and neuropathy, and although rare there's an increased risk of small bowel cancer and intestinal lymphoma.
- 1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease
- Average time to diagnosis is 13 years.
- 1 in 4 people diagnosed with coeliac disease had previously been diagnosed with IBS.
- 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.