

## WHAT'S THE TREATMENT?

Here is the good news: coeliac disease can be treated without medication. Currently, the only treatment for the condition is a strict gluten free diet. Gluten is contained in a lot of everyday food but there is a growing market of specially made gluten free products. And of course, there are lots of foods that are naturally gluten free.

Once gluten has been removed from your diet, you will begin to heal and symptoms will usually improve in a few weeks. It can take between two and five years for the gut to fully heal.

Once you have a diagnosis, you may be referred to a dietitian for advice on taking gluten out of your diet and for follow up care. To find out if gluten free food is available on prescription in your area, check our website at [www.coeliac.org.uk/prescriptionpolicies](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/prescriptionpolicies).

## WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

As the only UK charity for people with coeliac disease and gluten related conditions, Coeliac UK can help you adjust to the gluten free diet and learn more about your condition. Living gluten free means changing a lifetime of daily habits and can take time to get used to. Joining us gives you access to support and resources to make those changes easier and puts you in touch with a large community of members who can share their experiences. You don't need to be diagnosed with coeliac disease to join, Coeliac UK is here to help anyone who needs to live gluten free. To find out more visit [www.coeliac.org.uk/join](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/join).

## WHAT NEXT?

If you want to check your symptoms, Coeliac UK's online assessment will take you through the symptoms of coeliac disease and other risk factors. Visit [isitcoeliacdisease.org.uk](http://isitcoeliacdisease.org.uk).

If you're already sure from reading this that you should be checked, book an appointment with your GP to get a blood test that detects coeliac disease antibodies, see [www.coeliac.org.uk/diagnosis](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/diagnosis).

And remember, if you have any concerns or queries about your symptoms, getting tested or how to live gluten free, call us on 0333 332 2033 or visit our website at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk).

[COELIAC.ORG.UK/ISITCOELIACDISEASE](http://COELIAC.ORG.UK/ISITCOELIACDISEASE)

0333 332 2033

Coeliac UK is the charity for people who need to live without gluten. We provide independent, trustworthy advice and support, strive for better gluten free food in more places, and fund crucial research to manage the impacts of gluten and find answers to coeliac disease. And we do it all so that one day, no one's life will be limited by gluten.

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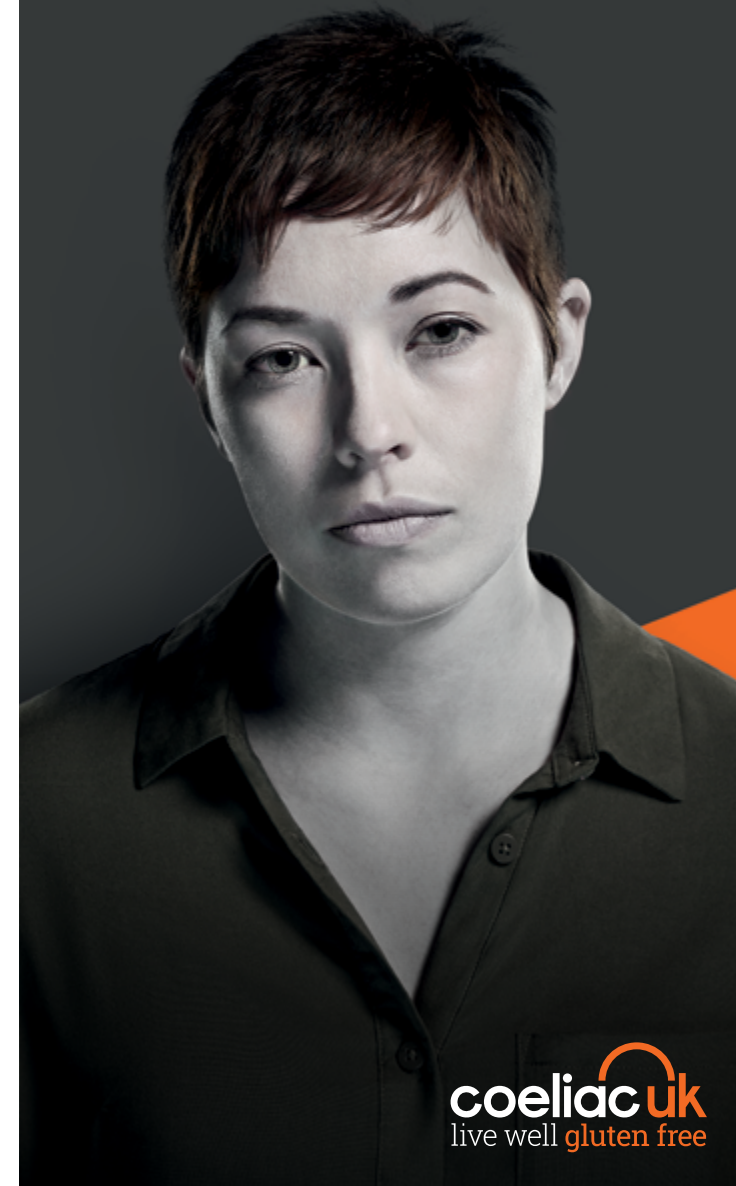
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# IS IT GOELIAC DISEASE?



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## WHAT IS COELIAC DISEASE?

Coeliac disease (pronounced see-lic) is a lifelong autoimmune condition where the body's immune system reacts to gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. The body's reaction to gluten causes damage to the lining of the intestine, the place where food and nutrients are absorbed. This deprives the body of the nutrients it needs and can lead to malnutrition.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Coeliac disease has a range of symptoms that affect different people in different ways, and can make the disease difficult to diagnose. People often report typical gut symptoms, but other parts of the body can also be affected. The most commonly reported symptoms are:

- frequent bouts of diarrhoea or loose stools
- nausea, feeling sick and vomiting
- stomach pain and cramping
- lots of gas and bloating
- feeling tired all the time, ongoing fatigue
- anaemia (you would be told if you're anaemic following a blood test)
- weight loss (although not in all cases)
- regular mouth ulcers
- constipation or hard stools
- dermatitis herpetiformis (DH), the skin manifestation of coeliac disease.

Coeliac disease affects 1 in 100 people. Currently, only 1 in 3 people in the UK living with coeliac disease know they have it, which means around half a million people are still undiagnosed.

In checking for the disease, you should also be aware of the following factors:

- **Coeliac disease is a genetic condition.** If you have a first degree family member (parent, sibling or child) with the disease, then your chances of having the condition increase to 1 in 10.
- **People with coeliac disease are also more likely to have other autoimmune conditions,** including Type 1 diabetes and autoimmune thyroid disease.
- **Lots of people diagnosed with coeliac disease were previously diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS),** as the symptoms often look similar. If you have been diagnosed with IBS in the past, but still have symptoms, and haven't had a coeliac disease test before, you should ask to be tested.

If you have any of the symptoms or conditions mentioned here, you should consider getting tested for coeliac disease.



Dermatitis Herpetiformis (DH), the skin manifestation of coeliac disease. Around one person in 3,300 is diagnosed with DH.

## HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR COELIAC DISEASE?

The first step to being tested for coeliac disease is to have a simple blood test.

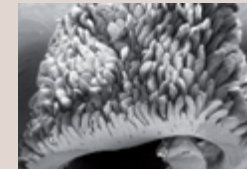
The test looks for the antibodies produced by people with coeliac disease when they eat gluten.

It is essential to keep eating gluten before and throughout the testing process, otherwise your body won't produce antibodies and you could get a false negative result. **Gluten must be eaten in more than one meal every day for six weeks before testing.**

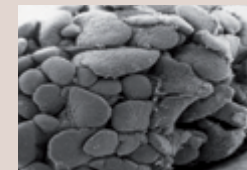
If the blood test is positive you will be referred for an endoscopy with a biopsy. This involves a small camera being passed through your mouth and stomach, then into the small bowel. Small samples of the lining of the small bowel are collected and then looked at for signs of coeliac disease. To find out more, visit our website: [www.coeliac.org.uk/gutbiopsy](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/gutbiopsy)

For some children, a biopsy may not be needed. See [www.coeliac.org.uk/children](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/children) for more information.

Being correctly diagnosed with coeliac disease means getting the right care and support from the NHS. This will include being monitored for conditions that you might have developed as a result of having coeliac disease, such as osteoporosis, neurological conditions and in very rare cases, small bowel cancer.



Healthy intestine



Intestine damaged by coeliac disease  
G.B. Gasbarrini and F. Mangiola, 2014