

What is coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease is a lifelong condition that means your body cannot tolerate gluten.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats and can be found in products such as bread, pasta, cereal, biscuits, cake, etc.

People with coeliac disease must be careful not to eat any gluten.

Who develops coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease can develop anytime during your life. You cannot catch it from other people but you are more likely to develop the condition if you have a family member affected by the disease.

How do I know if I have coeliac disease?

People with coeliac disease feel unwell if they eat foods containing gluten. The symptoms can vary from person to person as some people feel very unwell while others won't have any symptoms at all.

Common symptoms:

- Constipation and/or diarrhoea
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Growth problems
- Tiredness
- Weight loss
- Mouth ulcers
- Fertility problems

How is coeliac disease diagnosed?

It is important that you see your doctor if you think that you might have coeliac disease. The testing process includes three steps:

1. **Keep eating food with gluten:** Keep eating what you usually eat. Your doctor needs to see how food containing gluten affects your body.
2. **Blood test:** A simple blood test is the first step.
3. **Small bowel biopsy:** The doctor will perform an '*endoscopy*' to examine the inside of your bowel to check for signs of coeliac disease. It is a quick, painless procedure that is done while you are asleep.

How is coeliac disease treated?

If you are diagnosed with coeliac disease, the only treatment is to maintain a life-long strict gluten free diet. There are no tablets or medication available. Most people feel better soon after they stop eating foods with gluten. It can feel challenging at first but Coeliac Australia provides information and support for people with coeliac disease to help you to self-manage.

For more information

- Talk to your doctor
- Contact Coeliac Australia 1300 458 836 or www.coeliac.org.au
- If you are diagnosed, become a member with Coeliac Australia

For further information
1300 458 836
www.coeliac.org.au

Coeliac
Australia