

# What is Coeliac Disease?

How do you say Coeliac? **Seel ee ak.**

Coeliac disease means you can **not** eat food with gluten. Gluten is in wheat, rye, barley and oats. If you eat gluten, it will make you feel sick.

## What food has gluten?

- Pasta
- Bread
- Biscuits
- Cake
- Muffins
- Pastry
- Cereal
- Beer
- Oats For example, porridge
- Gravy
- Salad dressing
- Sauce. For example, soy sauce, stir through pasta sauce
- Fried food
- Lollies
- Fake meat, for example, hot dogs, strasburg

People who have coeliac disease and eat these foods will feel sick. When you eat gluten, your body thinks it is bad.

## How will you feel?

When you eat gluten your body will give you warning signs. You might have one (1) or more of these symptoms.

## Common symptoms

- Sore stomach
- Bloating stomach
- Lots of gas
- Feeling dizzy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Constipation
- Feeling tired
- Weight loss
- Mouth ulcers

## Very serious symptoms

- Thin and weak bones
- Diabetes
- Trouble getting pregnant
- Low iron in your blood
- Depression, feeling sad
- Poor teeth and gum health
- Cancer

## Who gets coeliac disease?

Anyone can get coeliac disease. You do **not** catch coeliac disease from other people. You are born with coeliac disease. You might not know you have coeliac disease. It can be triggered later in life. This is because our bodies change.

## Go to your doctor

Coeliac disease is very serious. You must go to see your doctor. Your doctor can do tests and check if you have coeliac disease. Your doctor will tell you what to do.

## For more information

- Talk to your doctor.
- Phone Coeliac Victoria and Tasmania 1300 458 836
- Look on our website <http://victas.coeliac.org.au>

# How to find out if you have coeliac disease

You might think you have coeliac disease. You must talk to your doctor first. Your doctor will do the proper tests.

## 1 Keep eating food with gluten

Keep eating what you usually eat. Your doctor needs to do blood tests to see how food with gluten affects your body.

You might have stopped eating food with gluten. You need to start eating food with gluten again. This will make sure you get a correct reading on your blood test. Before your blood test, you should have 4 pieces of bread every day for 6 weeks. This will be hard at the start. You might feel sick. It should get easier.

## 2 Go to your doctor for a blood test

A blood test is 1 way to show that you might have coeliac disease. Sometimes blood tests for coeliac disease are wrong. Your blood test might be normal but you keep feeling sick after eating food with gluten. You can ask your doctor for another blood test.

## 3 You can get a bowel test

This test is called an endoscopy. The doctor puts a tube down your throat. The doctor will give you an injection first so you are asleep and the tube won't hurt. The doctor uses the tube to look at the inside of your stomach. The test only takes 10 minutes. Your doctor will work out if you have coeliac disease.

You should have this test again in about 2 years. It will show if your stomach is getting better.

## For more information

- Talk to your doctor.
- When diagnosed contact Coeliac Victoria and Tasmania for more information and resources in your language 1300 458 836
- Look on our website <http://victas.coeliac.org.au>

# Coeliac disease symptom checklist

Every person with coeliac disease might feel different. Use this checklist to see which symptoms you have. You might have 1 or more of these symptoms.

- Do this checklist
- Take it to your doctor
- Talk to your doctor about your symptoms

## Common symptoms that most people have with coeliac disease

- Feeling tired and weak
- Low iron in your blood. You will need a blood test to test this
- Lots of gas and a bloated stomach
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Both diarrhoea and constipation
- Stomach cramps
- Feeling sick in the stomach and vomiting
- Sore stomach after eating
- Weight loss
- Mouth ulcers
- Sore bones and pain in your joints. For example, your elbows and knees
- Low vitamin levels. You will need a blood test to test this
- Itchy rash on your skin
- Poor teeth and gum health. For example, your teeth look yellow or brown

## Symptoms children might have

- Bloating stomach, pain and lots of gas
- Feeling sick in the stomach and vomiting
- Low iron in your blood. You will need a blood test to test this
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Both diarrhoea and constipation
- Large, very smelly poo
- Not putting on weight or weight loss
- Delayed growth
- Delayed start of puberty
- Tired and cranky

## Other types of health problems

If you have any of these health problems, tell your doctor.

- Weak bones that break easily. This is called osteoporosis
- Autoimmune thyroid disease. This is problems with your thyroid.
- Type 1 diabetes
- Multiple sclerosis
- Having miscarriages or trouble getting pregnant
- Depression, feeling sad

## For more information

- Talk to your doctor.
- Phone Coeliac Victoria and Tasmania 1300 458 836
- Look on our website <http://victas.coeliac.org.au>