

A PARENTS AND CARERS GUIDE

# EMPOWERING CHILDREN

*with coeliac disease*



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*with coeliac disease*

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Empowering Children with coeliac disease is prepared for the general information of members and friends of Coeliac Australia. The contents are not intended to provide medical, dietary, legal or related advice. Readers should seek medical or other professional advice before relying or acting upon the information contained within.

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# KIDS WITH COELIAC DISEASE.

## INTRODUCTION

Your child has been diagnosed with coeliac disease and you have been told they need a gluten free diet. You may be experiencing mixed emotions... worry about what this means for your child's future, relief that you have finally found an answer to your child's illness, or even anger, 'Why my child? Why me?' These reactions are all very normal. While there is a lot to process and learn, Coeliac Australia is here to help and support you.

### More about the disease

Coeliac disease is a genetic condition. Your child will have at least one part of two genes, called HLA DQ2 and HLA DQ8.

Not everyone who has a coeliac gene will get coeliac disease; environmental factors and other genes also play a role in the development of the condition. Why coeliac disease is 'triggered' in only some people who carry a coeliac gene is not known. Because of the genetic basis of coeliac disease, first-degree relatives (parents, brothers, sisters or children) of a person with coeliac disease have a 10% chance of also having coeliac disease. Family screening is recommended.



You and your family are about to embark on a journey of learning and change together. With the right information and support, this can be a rewarding experience as you help your child adjust to the gluten free diet.

Coeliac Australia is advised by a Medical Advisory Committee (MAC), made up of Australia's leading gastroenterologists, coeliac disease researchers, immunologists, dietitians and medical practitioners.

The advice we receive from the MAC is based on current research and ensures we remain informed on best practice for the diagnosis and management of coeliac disease.

### You are not alone

Please remember that there is a community of parents and children who have walked this path before you and who are waiting to support you and your family on your journey with coeliac disease. Some of you may already have someone in the family with coeliac disease, have it yourself or know of someone who does. Being diagnosed with coeliac disease early in life leads to many positive outcomes including improved physical and mental health, and better overall quality of life. With a bit of forward planning and good communication, your child will continue to enjoy birthday parties and other celebrations involving food.

This resource is designed to assist you on your journey to empower your child and ensure they enjoy life to the full - gluten free.

We encourage you to share his resource with your friends and family.



Refer to our website for more information:  
[www.coeliac.org.au/s/coeliac-disease/family-screening](http://www.coeliac.org.au/s/coeliac-disease/family-screening)

# WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Your child's diagnosis of coeliac disease may have been unexpected, and while you are relieved that you know 'what', the next question is 'how?' Be reassured that although the initial learning curve may be steep, you will soon be an expert on all things gluten free; your child will recover and go from strength to strength.

The best place to start is with the information provided by Coeliac Australia. Initially, work through the resources in your member kit and online at your own pace. We also encourage you to revisit relevant resources down the track to recap important points.

Encourage your child to take ownership and learn about managing their gluten free diet. Younger children can start by recognising familiar packaging. Once your child can confidently read, teach them to read product labels. Being able to pick up any product and read the label to determine whether it is suitable is very empowering; this important skill will give you and your child confidence and expand their choice of foods.



Find more information about reading labels in the 'Ingredient list' booklet, your member handbook and the 'Gluten Free Diet: Getting Started' resource.

Throughout this book we talk about your child, their wellbeing and how to support them. As a parent or carer of a child with coeliac disease, you need support too.

*Labels should be checked regularly. They can change even on 'familiar' packaging*



Accidents will happen, and there may be occasions when your child accidentally ingests some gluten. While this may or may not result in symptoms, a one-off accident will not result in lasting damage. It is only with regular and ongoing ingestion of gluten that persistent inflammation can pose a risk to future health.

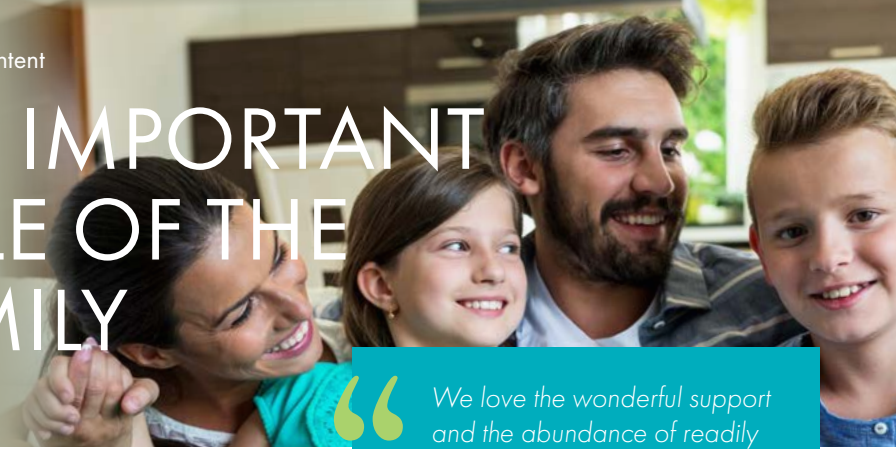
As your child gets older and reaches adolescence, they may have questions. Support them in their search for answers so they can be equipped with the confidence and skills to manage their coeliac disease.



← For your teen

Read the 'Generation GF' booklet found on the member area of the website.

# THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE FAMILY



## Parents and carers

Parents and carers have a very important role in supporting their children on their journey with coeliac disease and to advocate on their behalf.

Every child is unique and special and will need support in different areas and ways. While accepting the diagnosis and the gluten free diet can sometimes be challenging (sometimes more so for parents than the child themselves!), maintain a positive and proactive attitude. Remember that support is here – you are walking this journey with a community of people with coeliac disease who are here to support you. And with healthy and enjoyable gluten free food your child will be strong and healthy.

If you and/or your child would like extra support in adjusting to the diagnosis and lifestyle change, please get in touch. Coeliac Australia provides support, experience or simply somebody to talk to. We are just a phone call or email away and can answer your questions. Your doctor, dietitian and psychologist are also key members of your support team.

*Coeliac Australia  
provides support,  
experience or simply  
somebody to talk to*



1300 GLUTEN (1300 458 836)



*We love the wonderful support and the abundance of readily available information and easily accessible sources that create a bridge between my son and the rest of the community, which in essence has the ability to normalise his condition, instead of making him feel constantly different. For that, we are incredibly grateful.*

*Brendan, father of Zyo Tom*

It is inevitable that at times your child's gluten free diet will not be accommodated. It may be that at school a surprise treat will be brought in for the class that your child can't eat, and the teacher's 'secret stash' will be empty. Or a restaurant will be unable to provide a choice of gluten free food. Don't be annoyed, offended or angry. These people are not intentionally trying to leave your child out, nor are they being insensitive. They simply forgot, are unaware or too worried about your child being ill. Most importantly, remember that your child is learning from your reactions. From time to time you will encounter situations like this; teach them to be gracious, politely declining the treats offered, to accept the fact that this is just the way life is sometimes and people generally mean well. These situations are a learning and teaching opportunity; educating others so that they may be able to cater in the future is a really worthwhile approach and contributes to coeliac disease being more known, recognised and normalised.

## Siblings

Through their encouragement and understanding, siblings can be a great support to a brother or sister who has been diagnosed with coeliac disease.

An older sibling telling them that something 'tastes as good as the gluten version' may provide validation that what they now eat is actually pretty good.

While a gluten free diet is not recommended for those without coeliac disease, cooking and sharing gluten free meals with family and friends is a great way to show support.

Younger siblings may not understand why their older brother or sister cannot have some of the same foods that they can. This needs to be explained to them in a way they can understand – for example, 'your brother will feel sick if he eats that, so he will eat this instead.'

When a child is diagnosed with coeliac disease, consider having a quiet talk with their siblings on how best to support them. For a younger diagnosed child, this may include temporarily getting rid of all the old 'gluten' snacks from the cupboard and replacing them with the equivalent 'gluten free' alternative. Brothers and sisters who do not have coeliac disease may prefer to take the gluten containing snack to school to avoid eating them in front of your child who has coeliac disease. With time and as your child becomes used to the diet and what is okay and what is not, they will be more accepting of their siblings having something they can't. Having an acceptable alternative for them to enjoy will also help.

The most important thing a sibling can do is to be supportive and positive about the diet, always encouraging their brother or sister to enjoy life to the full - gluten free. We acknowledge that this may not always be easy to achieve, especially with the usual niggling and stirring that accompanies natural sibling rivalry. Emphasise the important role they play as supporter of their brother or sister with coeliac disease; this may help negate any feelings of being left out.

## Extended family

The role of the extended family can be very important to your child.

You may sometimes encounter difficulties with extended family members who do not understand the importance of a strict gluten free diet. Well-meaning family and friends may make statements like, 'A little bit of gluten will not hurt them', not realising that the gluten free diet is the essential 'medicine' your child needs to remain healthy and thrive.

### These tips may help:

- At the earliest opportunity, explain your child's condition to relatives you see often. Ensure they understand the importance of compliance and provide reassurance about the future for your child with coeliac disease. If they understand the importance of the diet and the implications of non-compliance, they will not feel tempted to give your child things to eat that they should not have.
- If your child regularly eats at or visits their grandparents, buy them their own copy of the latest 'Ingredient List' booklet so they can confidently shop and cater for your child. Provide a copy of 'The Gluten Free Diet - Getting Started' resource, pass on your copies of 'The Australian Coeliac' magazine – and even this booklet!
- Provide some staple gluten free food items for when your child visits. In this way your relatives will learn and become more confident about what to feed your child and they will feel relaxed when they visit. It will also give you peace of mind and confidence in leaving your child in their care.



Additional copies of the 'Ingredient List' booklet is available for purchase in the member area of the website.

The 'Ingredient List' app is available on Apple store



# FRIENDS

Having the support of friends and their parents can make a huge difference to a child who has been diagnosed with coeliac disease.

At the earliest opportunity, your child's condition should be explained to parents of friends your child sees often. Explain that this condition is not contagious and is managed by simply sticking to a gluten free diet. Older children and teenagers may prefer to take on this role themselves. Depending on how much contact your child has with the friend,

explain the basics of the diet. You will find most parents very keen to learn what is safe for your child and may even build up their own supply of gluten free foods for all the kids to share when your child is around.

Your child's friends will be able to learn that there are certain foods that your child cannot have and will usually be more than happy to eat the same things together. It's very important to get your child's friends 'on board' with this so they will support and encourage your child.



Get your child's friends 'on board'



# AT HOME

Children who have been quite unwell before diagnosis generally find trying new foods a difficult experience. This may be because pre-diagnosis, eating would often make them feel unwell. Even very small children may subconsciously work out that it is food that is making them sick and can become very particular about what they eat. This can be quite hard for worried parents, especially when there are concerns about malnutrition. 'Fussy' eating is also a normal part of growing up for children, with or without coeliac disease. If you have concerns, regularly check in with your child to review their eating preferences. This conversation should be ongoing as you progress on your journey with coeliac disease.

Be patient when encouraging small children to try new foods. Your child can become overwhelmed if you offer multiple new things at a meal or in one day. Always offer new foods in small amounts alongside their staple favourites and offer a new food regularly. You may like to try a 'No thank you'

bite or plate; this practice encourages children to try new foods without the pressure of having to finish everything, leaving them more open to experiment and taste. Children may need to try a new food many times before liking or accepting it. Encourage your child to explore new foods by looking, touching and smelling first, then tasting. You may also like to involve your child in choosing new foods during shopping trips or planning different meals to prepare. Children generally also enjoy helping with food preparation; children who are actively involved in preparing a food or meal are more likely to try that food. Eating meals together as a family, where possible, will also provide a positive eating experience, with opportunity for parents and siblings to model good eating habits.

Where there are genuine concerns about your child getting adequate nutrition, please seek guidance about nutrition support from your doctor and dietitian.

Stay calm and try to create a positive atmosphere around the table.

This is also the case for older children, teens and adults. Gluten free foods can have a different texture than gluten containing foods. It may mean that they will take some time to accept some gluten free foods, particularly bread. Try different brands of gluten free breads, pastas and cereals to let your child experience new flavours. Revisiting brands tried previously may also be worthwhile; tastes and preferences tend to adapt over time.



*Stay calm and try to create a positive atmosphere around the table*



# PANTRY AND FRIDGE

Take the time to go through everything in your pantry and fridge, read the labels and sort them into gluten free or gluten containing.

## These tips may help:

- Store gluten free food on a separate shelf. This assists children as they start to learn the different products and packaging, plus they know that everything on 'my' shelf is gluten free.
- When it comes to pantry staples, most people find it easier to use gluten free sauces, stocks, gravy, condiments etc. for the entire household.
- Different coloured food storage containers can be used to differentiate between food with gluten and food that is gluten free. This is a big help for children to quickly learn that everything in a blue container (or with a blue lid) is okay for them to eat.
- Use a permanent marker to highlight 'gluten free' items. This is also very helpful to other family members and extended family or babysitters who may not be as aware of what is gluten free as you are.
- Some parents use 'gluten free' stickers on gluten free items in the pantry or school lunch boxes.

You will soon find a system that works best for you and your family.



# OUT AND ABOUT

The golden rule when you are out and about is 'Be Prepared'. Always pack a container of gluten free snacks whenever you are going out. Most venues today cater for the gluten free diet, but it never hurts to be prepared just in case.

Take snacks along with you when visiting friends. To ensure your child is included, you may prefer to supply enough for everyone to share. This way you can also help educate friends and family about gluten free food.

When first going out for a meal or morning/afternoon tea, you may like to refer to the Coeliac Australia Member Recommended Restaurant List.



Find the Member Recommended Restaurant List in the Members Area of Coeliac Australia's website

Use this list to find an accredited restaurant or another where a member has had a good experience. Many cafes and restaurants are now gluten aware, and this makes eating out more accessible than ever before. You may choose to check online or phone ahead to confirm the availability of gluten free options.

When you have the time, investigate the gluten free takeaway choices available to your child. You will probably be surprised at what is out there, as more and more takeaway outlets are starting to cater for the gluten free diet or have dishes that are suitable by ingredient.

*“ When eating out, politely confirm your meal will be gluten free twice. First when ordering, and again when the food is delivered to your table. You don't want to accidentally accept the gluten plate!*

*Deborah, long term Coeliac Australia member*

*“ In restaurants, always say you 'have coeliac disease and cannot eat gluten', not just that you need GF food. And don't apologise or feel like a burden to others. This is all about your health and most people are very understanding about dietary requirements these days. If they're not, then they need to be educated.*

*Brent, long term Coeliac Australia member*



# SHOPPING

“ Shop around the outside of the supermarket - the cheapest and healthiest gluten free foods don't need an ingredient label : meat, dairy, eggs, and fruits and vegetables

*Kate, Coeliac Australia member*

Your shopping can be done at a regular supermarket. Health food stores and online stores can also be a good source of specialty gluten free products. Learning to read food labels is an important and empowering skill, allowing you to make an informed choice when selecting suitable food products. You'll be a pro in no time. Key rules for reading labels include:

### Back to basics

There are many naturally gluten free (and healthy) foods – base your family's meals on these e.g. fruit, vegetables, legumes, unprocessed meats, eggs, nuts, milk & cheese, and many gluten free grains.

### Gluten free really is gluten free

A product labelled 'gluten free' must not contain detectable gluten. A 'gluten free' label overrides everything on the ingredients list.

### Look for the Coeliac Australia crossed grain logo



It's found on all products endorsed by Coeliac Australia. Businesses who complete the stringent Endorsement Program are eligible to use the symbol on their products. When you see it, you can be confident the product is gluten free.

### No news is good news

Australian labelling laws require that all gluten derived ingredients be declared on food labels. Ingredients where the source grain is not identified are suitable; if they contained gluten, it would say so. Ultimately, if you don't see wheat, rye, barley, oats in the ingredient list, the product is suitable for you to eat.

# SHOPPING continues...

## Exceptions

Some wheat-derived ingredients are so highly processed they are suitable for the gluten free diet. The three most common exceptions are:

- Glucose syrup (wheat)\*
- Caramel colour (wheat)
- Dextrose (wheat)

These ingredients are considered suitable for the gluten free diet.

*\*Glucose syrup is exempt from having to declare when it is wheat derived.*

## Allergen summary statements – ‘Contains’ statements

Summary statements help us to identify which allergens are present in a product; the source ingredient of any allergen will also always be listed in the statement of ingredients. Summary statements will appear as ‘Contains: ...’

The food code requires that the terms ‘gluten’ and ‘wheat’ be used, and that they be declared separately in the allergen summary statement. This is to make labelling clear and helpful for both those with coeliac disease and those with wheat allergy.

A quick check of the summary statement is helpful... if any ingredient contains gluten, it will state ‘Contains: Gluten’.

## Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) – Cross Contact Statements

e.g. ‘May be present: Gluten’, ‘May contain wheat’ or ‘Manufactured on the same line as gluten containing products’ etc.

These statement are used to indicate a risk of inadvertent contamination from gluten-containing products. PAL is often used unnecessarily. While the ‘safest’ approach is to avoid foods that use PAL, each individual should use their discretion when deciding whether to use such products.



Find more detailed information on label reading in the ‘Gluten Free Diet: Getting Started’ resource.



Available in your new member kit.

Additional copies of the ‘Ingredient List’ booklet is available for purchase in the member area of the website.

The ‘Ingredient List’ app is available on Apple store





# COOKING FOR THE FAMILY

When cooking for your family, it may be simpler and more time efficient to make one gluten free evening meal that is suitable for the whole family. Many family favourites may already be gluten free, or can easily be made gluten free with some minor tweaks.

Roast meat and vegetables is an easy gluten free meal, just make sure you use a gluten free gravy and avoid flouring the meat. A stir fry with meat or tofu, vegetables and rice is another quick and easy gluten free meal; choose gluten free sauces to complete the meal. Spaghetti Bolognese is on high rotation in most homes; prepare a gluten free Bolognese sauce for everyone to enjoy with their gluten free or gluten containing spaghetti (cooked in separate saucepans).

Preparing gluten free meals and snacks for the whole family makes life easier for you and also helps your child feel included. There are many gluten free biscuits, slices, cakes, muffins (sweet and savoury) which will be enjoyed by the whole family.

However, we do not recommend that everything in the house should be gluten free or that those without coeliac disease should follow a gluten free diet.

While a gluten free diet can be nutritious and balanced if well managed, it is not recommended for those who do not have coeliac disease.

A gluten free diet is not 'healthier' and gluten free staples are more expensive than their gluten containing counterparts. Inadequate gluten intake can also interfere with subsequent coeliac disease screening in family members.

It may seem like an easy or kind solution to make the whole family eat everything gluten free so your child does not feel different. While it is vital that they feel safe and confident in their home environment, it is just as important that they are aware of other foods – those that are acceptable and those that are not. The home environment is the ideal place to teach them that their food will sometimes be different to others; and that this is ok.

It is recommended that you see a dietitian with experience in coeliac disease to help you establish a healthy gluten free diet for your child.



Download the Coeliac Australia Recipe Book from the member area of the website.

# LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## SCHOOL, PRE-SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE

### Steps for a successful and easy enrolment:

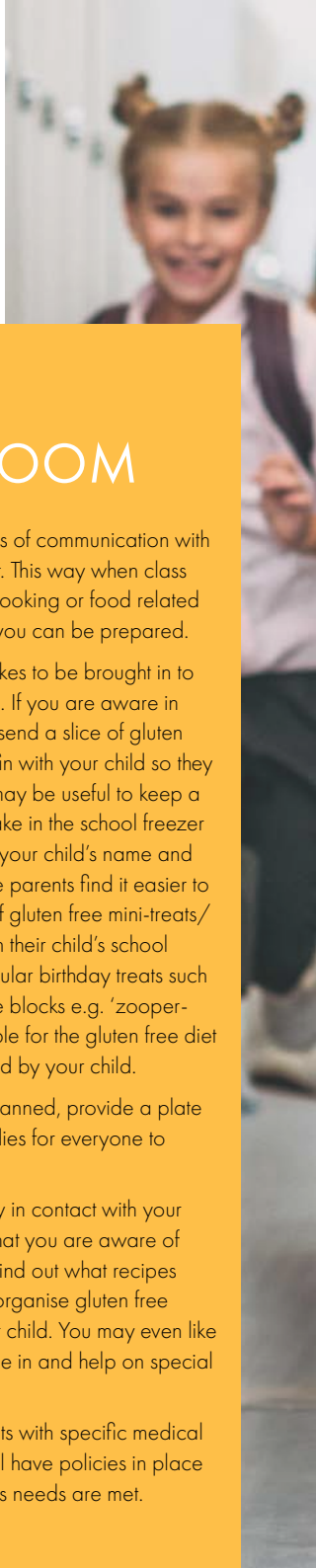
- Notify the school principal or centre director at your child's school or childcare centre that your child has coeliac disease. This should be communicated with all relevant staff and personnel. This should occur as soon as they are diagnosed or on enrolment, and again at the beginning of each new school year. Ensure your child's record is updated to reflect their diagnosis of coeliac disease and need for a gluten free diet.
- Provide a copy of Coeliac Australia's 'Guidelines for Managing Coeliac Disease in Learning Environments' resource to your child's school or child care centre.
- Your child's school or pre-school may require a risk minimisation plan to help reduce any risk of your child ingesting gluten (Template: Risk Minimisation Plan could be found in 'Guidelines for Managing Coeliac Disease in Learning Environments').
- Complete and provide a 'Management Action Plan/Plan for Gluten Exposures' to the school, detailing your child's requirements (Template: Plan for Gluten Exposures – found in 'Guidelines for Managing Coeliac Disease in Learning Environments').

**Note:** Some environments may require confirmation of the diagnosis and dietary need from your child's doctor.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

- Maintain open lines of communication with your child's teacher. This way when class parties or special cooking or food related days are planned you can be prepared.
- It is common for cakes to be brought in to celebrate birthdays. If you are aware in advance, you can send a slice of gluten free cake or a muffin with your child so they do not miss out. It may be useful to keep a muffin or slice of cake in the school freezer (well labelled with your child's name and 'gluten free'). Some parents find it easier to leave a selection of gluten free mini-treats/ chocolate bars with their child's school teacher. Other popular birthday treats such as lollipops and ice blocks e.g. 'zooper-doopers' are suitable for the gluten free diet and can be enjoyed by your child.
- If a class party is planned, provide a plate of gluten free goodies for everyone to share.
- Cooking days: Stay in contact with your child's teacher so that you are aware of upcoming events. Find out what recipes will be made and organise gluten free ingredients for your child. You may even like to volunteer to come in and help on special days such as these.

There are many students with specific medical needs and school's will have policies in place to ensure each students needs are met.



## PLAYTIME

While gluten does not cause harm if it touches the skin of someone with coeliac disease, you may prefer to use a gluten free play dough to minimise the risk of gluten ingestion by younger children.

Teach children good hand hygiene and the importance of not eating play dough.

Gluten free play dough is now available to purchase or can be made using the following recipe:

### GLUTEN FREE PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

- ½ cup white rice flour
- ½ cup maize cornflour
- ½ cup salt
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon cooking oil
- Food colouring, if desired

Mix all ingredients. Cook and stir over low heat for 3 minutes, until it forms a ball. Cool completely before storing in a resealable plastic bag.

## SCHOOL CANTEENS

With some planning and forethought, children with coeliac disease can enjoy purchasing food from their school canteen. Look through the school's canteen menu with your child and highlight any gluten free options available.

Many healthy canteen selections are already gluten free or can be easily adapted to become gluten free. If you feel the need, you can always approach the canteen manager or canteen committee to determine their current gluten free policy or initiate the inclusion of more gluten free snacks that comply with the healthy canteen initiatives. Again, Coeliac Australia can provide resources to assist with this process, explaining basic food choices, food preparation and avoiding gluten contamination.

If possible or necessary you may like to provide the canteen with appropriate individually wrapped and clearly marked foods that can be kept frozen for when needed. Ensure that the instructions regarding preparation and handling of the food are attached and noticeable to avoid any potential contamination.



To find out more, please contact  
Coeliac Australia membership team  
1300 GLUTEN (1300 458 836)



## SCHOOL LUNCH

Just over one third of your child's daily food intake is consumed at school and most kids, with or without coeliac disease, take their own snacks and lunch to school each day. This makes life a little simpler; you can control and hence provide healthy, gluten free foods and meals. However, be aware that children sometimes swap foods, despite schools supporting a policy of not sharing foods. Make it very clear to your child that they must eat only what you provide them; they mustn't eat other children's foods, even if the other child tells them it is gluten free. You may find that as you have made the extra effort in preparing your child's lunchbox, they become the envy of their peers!

### The lunchbox

A good size lunchbox with lots of small compartments is a good investment to ensure a variety of different foods is provided and so that your child will never feel like they're missing out. When taking leftovers, a good quality food thermos or thermal container for keeping food warm can be useful.

Especially for younger children, choose containers and food packages that are easy to open. Get your child involved! Kids will be more likely to eat their lunch if they have had a hand in choosing and preparing it.

### Include healthy options from the 5 core food groups:

- Wholegrain (gluten free)
- Calcium rich foods e.g. milk, cheese or yoghurt
- Fruit
- Lean meats, fish, nuts\*\*, eggs, legumes
- Vegetables

\*The recommended number of serves from each food group will vary with age. \*\*Check with your school if there is a 'no nuts policy' in place.

## CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

When it comes to extracurricular activities that your child attends regularly such as sport, scouts, different clubs, youth group and even band, inform the respective club/coach/leader of your child's condition. Highlight that this will not affect their performance, but should food or treats be provided for a particular occasion, an appropriate option needs to be available for your child. Provide them with a container of suitable foods or help with suggestions of gluten free options. Maintain open lines of communication so that you can be prepared.

Other occasions such as sausage sizzles, sleepovers ([see page 18](#)), camps ([see page 18](#)) or meals out provide an opportunity to be involved. Plan ahead for these events, for example, get involved with the sausage sizzle by offering to source gluten free sausages (most sausages are gluten free nowadays) for everyone to enjoy. By bringing along gluten free bread for your child (and any others who require gluten free) your child will be able to enjoy the occasion (and the same meal) with their friends.

Social occasions often revolve around food, which can sometimes make it a little tricky. Where possible, be prepared and have gluten free alternatives at hand. It is also important to teach your child to ask if foods are gluten free, and to graciously decline gluten containing foods when they are offered.



Visit [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au) to learn about the Australian Dietary Guidelines

# SCHOOL EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

## Day Excursions

Parents are usually required to complete a form prior to a school excursion. Do not assume that the school will automatically request gluten free catering if food is to be externally provided; provide the necessary information for each excursion and always send some suitable back up food and snacks.

## Overnight camps

Camps are a fantastic time for all children to be with their friends and an important opportunity to develop independence. For children with coeliac disease, it is also an opportunity for them to take an active role in managing their condition.

When you receive notice about the camp, contact the camp organisers (who may be school staff or an external host). Most externally run camps are familiar with special dietary requirements, including gluten free. Should the organisers be unfamiliar with the gluten free diet, you may need to supply further information. If appropriate or necessary, you may like to request a menu/meal plan from the organisers to help them with catering gluten free. As a precautionary measure, pack a small box of gluten free food for your child.

If it is your child's first camp and parent helpers are requested, you may like to volunteer (if practical). This may be a great way for you and your child to learn about food preparation in a different setting and will also provide a good opportunity to educate others about the gluten free diet.

## SLEEPOVERS

Kids of every age love the prospect of a sleepover at a friend's house. Speak with the host parent/s prior to the sleepover to make sure they are aware of your child's requirements. Whilst many parents of other children will be forward-thinking and accommodating for children with special dietary requirements, some may not be, simply because they are unaware. It is polite to let other parents know that your child has coeliac disease and will bring some of their own food to a playdate or sleepover. Many parents will then be quite obliging in looking after your child's gluten free needs.

You can ask about the planned menu and provide alternatives to compliment the meal, for example if they are planning to make pizza at home, offer to send along a gluten free pizza base, or if they are going to get takeaway let them know which local pizza places do gluten free pizzas. If a barbeque is on the books, then offer to send gluten free rolls/bread/tortillas for your child. And don't forget about dessert options as well as breakfast for the next morning!

Approved treats can also be provided – because what's a sleepover without it?! It's always better to pack too much food than not enough – just in case.

Events such as these are an important opportunity for your child to develop the skills and independence they need to take responsibility for their own health.

# HOLIDAYS AND TRAVEL



You're planning your first family holiday since your child was diagnosed with coeliac disease... how does this change things? The simple rule with holidays is the same as 'Be Prepared'.

Travelling while following a gluten free diet can be made a lot easier by first contacting Coeliac Australia for information and tips about travel within Australia or to another country.

Information available includes:

- Contact details for support organisations overseas
- List of restaurants and cafes recommended by members where their gluten free needs were catered for
- Travel translations
- Travel sheets with information about different countries.
- General travel information sheet.

This information is all available in the member area of Coeliac Australia's website.

Where venues provide catering, you can ring/email prior to booking accommodation to ask questions on the availability of gluten free food or for restaurant recommendations.

## GETTING THERE

### Air travel

It is essential to notify the airline at the time of booking that a gluten free meal is required.

Each airline differs in the catering service that they provide; a few airlines do not cater for the gluten free diet and some budget airlines may not provide meals at all. On these occasions it is best to BYO, or find a gluten free meal at the airport before takeoff.

Ensure you (or your travel agent) orders a gluten free meal on booking. While a gluten free meal may have been ordered, you should have some packaged gluten free food with you in a cabin bag just in case the food does not eventuate or the flight is delayed or transferred.

If you are travelling overseas it is suggested that you carry a medical certificate stating that your child has a medical condition that requires special dietary food. This letter may help to explain to customs why you are carrying food upon entry to and as you leave countries. If carrying food with you, it must always be declared.

### Car travel

If your family is going on a road trip, pack a supply of your child's favourite gluten free staples and treats. While you can be confident of sourcing gluten free products during your travels in Australia, you may not always be able to find the brands or products your child prefers. Gluten free options may not always be readily available in more remote areas.



Login to the members area of Coeliac Australia website for more travel information

### Other types of transport

If you are going on a long rail or bus trip, talk to the tour operator or travel company and see how your child's dietary needs can be catered for. As always, be prepared with some shelf stable gluten free foods and your child's preferred products.

## ONCE YOU ARRIVE

Once you reach your holiday destination, investigate the food options available to you. If you are staying in a resort, restaurants commonly cater with a buffet style system. Speak to the chef and catering staff about what options available are gluten free – you may find you're spoilt for choice!

One of the great things about travelling internationally is that you get to experience new tastes from all over the world. Again, you

may want to be prepared by investigating your destinations cuisines and food culture prior to leaving.

When eating out in restaurants, do not assume that the items on the menu are prepared in the same way as those at home. Find out the full details of the cooking methods and ingredients in each item to save your child from accidentally eating gluten.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

If applying for travel insurance, you may need to disclose coeliac disease as a pre-existing condition. This should not affect the availability of cover from recognised insurers. Some insurers add a surcharge if you want to be covered for any illness relating to coeliac disease while travelling, so do your research.

*Have a great trip!*

# FINAL THOUGHTS

“ When I was first diagnosed my Coeliac Australia membership was a light in what seemed like a long and overwhelming tunnel. I had clear resources on ingredients, products and eateries. I was armed with common things to be aware of. But now, most importantly, I am part of a community.

*Alisa, mum of 10 yo Jordan*

“ To people who struggle with a diagnosis of coeliac disease... remember , this won't change your passions, your desires and ambitions – it's just changing the fuel.

*Nathan, long time Coeliac Australia member*