

# Living Well With Coeliac Disease

*Coeliac disease is a relatively common condition that affects the digestive system of individuals, causing inflammation and damage to the small intestine.*

*This damage is caused when gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye, triggers an immune response, leading to the destruction of the lining of the small intestine.*

Symptoms of coeliac disease can vary widely. They can range from mild to severe. Some symptoms can include: abdominal pain, bloating, fatigue, diarrhoea, and weight loss. If left untreated, coeliac disease can lead to a range of complications, including anaemia, osteoporosis, and an increased risk of certain types of cancer.

The good news is that coeliac disease can be managed with a gluten-free diet. Here are some tips on living well with coeliac disease:

## 1. Learn Which Foods To Avoid

The most important step in managing coeliac disease is to learn which foods contain gluten and to avoid them. To begin, this can be challenging, as gluten is often found in unexpected foods, such as sauces, soups, and gravies. It is essential to read food labels carefully. Those with coeliac disease need to be aware of cross-contamination.

Just small amounts of gluten can cause damage to the small intestine. It is also important to remember that there are many gluten-free alternatives available, including bread, pasta, and flour.



## 2. Plan Ahead

Eating out can be challenging when you have coeliac disease, as many restaurants do not offer gluten-free options. It is essential to plan ahead by researching restaurants before you go out. This ensures that you can find gluten-free options. Also, it is always a good idea to bring gluten-free snacks with you when you are out and about. Always having snacks means that you always have a safe back-up for food.

## 3. Cook At Home

Cooking at home is the best way to ensure that your meals are gluten-free. This way, you can control the ingredients and avoid cross-contamination. There are many gluten-free recipes available online. These can be a great way to experiment with new ingredients and flavours.

## 4. Take Supplements

Individuals with coeliac disease may be at risk of malnutrition. This is due to the damage to the small intestine making it difficult to absorb nutrients from food. Therefore, it is essential to speak to your doctor or a registered dietitian about taking supplements.

For example, many Coeliacs take supplements such as iron, calcium, and vitamin D, to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients that the body needs.

## 5. Seek Support

Living with coeliac disease can be challenging, and it can be helpful to seek support from others who are going through the same experience. Support groups and online forums can be a great way to connect with others, share tips and advice, and get emotional support. Check out [Coeliac UK](https://www.coeliacuk.co.uk)'s website and join their support group!

In conclusion, coeliac disease can be a challenging condition to manage. However, with the right knowledge and support, it is possible to live a healthy and fulfilling life. By learning which foods to avoid, planning ahead, cooking at home, taking supplements, and seeking support, individuals with coeliac disease can stay well and enjoy a varied and nutritious diet.

