

Gluten How much is needed for coeliac disease testing?

This information is about gluten in the diet when you or your child has been recommended a blood test or biopsy for the diagnosis of Coeliac Disease.

It is vital for enough gluten containing foods to be in the diet for a Coeliac diagnosis to be made, otherwise the blood test or biopsy can be falsely normal. Gluten is found in foods made with wheat, rye or barley. Gluten needs to remain in the diet until a definite diagnosis has been made. Only having low amounts of gluten may also cause a false negative (normal) test result.

If a gluten-free diet has already been started, gluten will need to be reintroduced for at least 6 weeks before a blood test or biopsy. This is sometimes referred to as a gluten challenge. Blood tests may remain reliable for about 2 weeks after starting gluten-free, but if longer than that the diet would need to be changed back to one with gluten. If you have been gluten free for a while you may want to increase gluten gradually over a week or two first to minimise any symptoms.

How much gluten-containing food to eat?

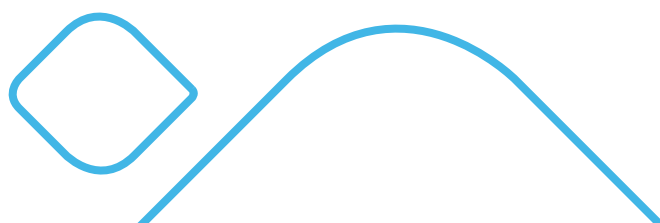
Aim to have at least two gluten-containing meals per day for at least 6 weeks prior to the test eg Weetabix for breakfast and then a sandwich or a pasta dish later, plus maybe a snack containing gluten eg biscuit/cracker.

The table below gives information about how much gluten is in different foods to ensure you are getting enough for the tests to be accurate. Each of the portions of foods in the table below contains about 2-3g of gluten.

- **For school-aged children:** Aim for approximately **10g of gluten per day**.
- **For younger children:** Aim for **5-8g of gluten per day**.
- **The minimum amount for diagnosis if having severe difficulties with eating gluten:** The minimum a child should eat is 2-3g of gluten per day, although this does not guarantee that the levels will be high enough for a conclusive diagnosis.

Occasionally this much gluten may not be possible because of very severe symptoms from gluten containing foods. If this occurs, please contact your Paediatrician or Dietitian to discuss. It may still be worth being tested, although the result may not be conclusive.

Please note: using foods that contain only very small amounts of gluten (for example gravy on a meal) is not sufficient on its own. Oats do not naturally contain gluten and, even if contaminated, do not provide enough gluten for coeliac disease testing. Rice, potatoes, meat, fish, fruits etc do not contain gluten.



| Food | Each of these contains approximately 2-3g of gluten Aim for about 10g for older children; 5-8g for pre-school children per day |
|-------------|--|
| Bread | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One medium slice • Two small slices • One bread roll |
| Flour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30g of any wheat based flour (3-4 level tablespoons) |
| Pasta | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30g uncooked pasta (approx.60g cooked pasta) Note: this is a small toddler size portion. |
| Cakes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One slice (approx. 30g) • One cupcake • Average size sponge pudding |
| Pastry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45g pastry (amount in 1 small slice of quiche or a small jam tart) |
| Cereal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Weetabix • One Shredded Wheat • One bowl of puffed wheat |
| Crackers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 cream crackers |
| Biscuits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 medium sized biscuits (digestives, rusks) • 3 small biscuits (custard creams, bourbons etc) |
| Other foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 fish fingers / similar amount chicken nuggets – crumbed or battered |

Further Information:

RUH Coeliac dietitian information/leaflets, including more information on coeliac testing:
www.ruh.nhs.uk/Coeliac

Coeliac UK has lots of information about coeliac disease on their website www.coeliac.org.uk

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Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.

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