

Gluten Challenge

Do not commence a gluten free diet prior to being tested for coeliac disease. **If a gluten free diet has already been adopted, the tests used to diagnose coeliac disease are unreliable,** and can be falsely negative. A gluten challenge will be required to allow for testing and a conclusive diagnosis.

HOW MUCH GLUTEN DO I NEED TO EAT?

If gluten has been removed from the diet, a normal gluten containing diet must be resumed for **six weeks** prior to testing (blood test or biopsy).

During this 'gluten challenge', you should aim to ingest approximately 10g of gluten. This means four slices of wheat-based bread (or equivalent) should be consumed each day for adults or two slices of wheat-based bread each day for children.

Note: Not all bread is equal!

The amount of gluten in a slice of bread can range from approximately 2 grams to 4 grams.

It is advised to gradually build up to the recommended challenge dose over a week or so. Initial symptoms may be severe but should ease over time.

1 slice of wheat-based bread containing 2 – 2.5 grams of gluten is equivalent to:

- ½ cup wheat-based cereal
- 1 Weet-bix
- ½ cup cooked wheat-based pasta
- ½ English muffin
- ½ large bread roll
- 4-5 crispbreads (e.g. Vita-Wheats, Salada)
- 8-10 crackers (e.g. water crackers, Jatz)
- 2 small sweet biscuits (e.g. Scotch Finger)

There is limited consensus as to the dose of gluten and length of time challenge is needed. Evidence (Leffler et al, Gut 2013;62:996-1004) suggests that 3-6 grams per day for 4 weeks may be sufficient to achieve changes in the blood tests (coeliac serology) for most people (~70%) with coeliac disease.

