Patient Information

Dietetics

Allergy - Gluten Challenge (Children)

A gluten challenge is a way to safely check if your child is still sensitive to gluten.

Reintroducing gluten into your child's diet is necessary to confirm if they need to stay on a gluten-free diet for life. It is important that your child eats enough gluten during this time, either for their initial biopsy or for the gluten challenge.

If your child has no symptoms when eating gluten, they should start the challenge **3 months** before their biopsy and continue eating gluten until then.

The challenge should last at least **4 to 6 weeks** to give the best chance of a clear diagnosis. However, if your child has severe reactions to gluten, it may not be possible to continue for this long. If this happens, please contact your Paediatrician or Dietitian for advice.

Getting a clear diagnosis is really important to avoid following a gluten-free diet unnecessarily.

Recommended gluten intake for most children

Most children need 10-15g of gluten per day during a gluten challenge.

The following foods contain 2-3g of wheat protein **(gluten)** when eaten in the amounts listed:

- Ordinary Bread - 1 medium slice from a large loaf

- Cereal - 1 weetabix or 1 shredded wheat
- Breakfast cereals - 1 bowl (20g) of sugar puffs or puffed wheat
- Biscuits - 3 medium-sized biscuits, 2 digestives or 3 cream crackers
- Rusks - 2 rusks (original or low sugar)
- Bread alternatives - ½ pitta bread
- Pastries - 1 croissant
- Cakes and puddings - 1 slice cake (30g)1 portion of sponge pudding (50g)
- Pastry - 45g pastry
- Flour -30g plain flour
- Semolina - 20g raw semolina 200g (7oz) of tinned semolina pudding (½ large tin)
- Spaghetti - 4 tablespoons (60g) of cooked or tinned spaghetti
- Sausages - 2 large or 3 chipolata sausages (check they contain wheat-based rusk)
- Fish fingers -3 fish fingers (in breadcrumbs or batter)

Meal recommendations

Aim for your child to have at least 2, preferably 3, gluten-containing meals per day. Each meal should contain at least 5g of gluten.

Infants and young children

For young children, it may not be possible to reach 10g of gluten per day. Instead, aim for 2 meals a day that include gluten, using foods like bread, pasta or gluten-containing breakfast cereal as the main carbohydrate. For example:

- Breakfast: ½ Weetabix
- Lunch: 1 slice of bread

This should provide enough gluten for the challenge.

Please note: Using only foods with small amounts of gluten, like gravy, is not enough to meet the necessary intake.

What happens after the biopsy?

After a biopsy has been done, it will be decided whether your child needs to follow a lifelong gluten-free diet.

If a gluten-free diet is necessary, your doctor or Dietitian will contact you to provide further support and guidance.

Further information

If you need more information, please contact:

Coventry Dietitians

University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust

Contact Telephone: 024 7696 6161

The advice in this leaflet is based on the “Guideline for the diagnosis and management of Coeliac disease in children” by the Coeliac Working Group of BSPGHAN, 2012.

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Document History	
Department:	Dietetics
Contact:	26161
Updated:	November 2024
Review:	November 2027
Version:	4
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1614/13