

# Vegan diet for coeliac disease

**Rosie Martin Registered Dietitian**

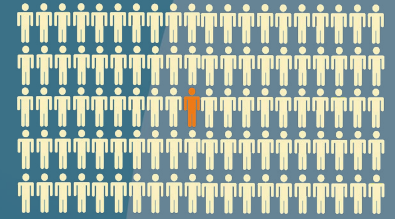


**PLANT-BASED**  
Health Professionals UK

Promoting Sustainable Health and Nutrition

**Coeliac Disease (CD) is estimated to affect 1 in 100 people in the UK.**

**CD is an autoimmune condition** whereby the immune system attacks the gut lining on ingestion of the protein *gliadin* in gluten.



**Sources of gluten include wheat, rye and barley**

**Damage to the gut can lead to a reduction in the absorption of certain nutrients**

**A diagnosis of CD requires a life-long, strict gluten free diet to heal the gut and keep it healthy and functioning optimally long-term**

**It is agreed by the British Dietetic Association that a well-planned vegan (or 100% plant-based) diet can provide all the nutrients needed at any stage of life, and this includes people with CD.**

As someone with CD, there are a few key nutrients to consider in your diet. See below for our top tips on meeting your nutrient requirements on a vegan diet.

## Calcium

Calcium is one of the key minerals required for bone health. Daily recommended intake for people with CD is higher than the average population, at 1000-1500mg per day. To meet your daily recommendations include plenty of the following calcium-rich plant foods.



Calcium-fortified plant milk (excluding oat milk as not gluten free), calcium-set tofu, dark green vegetables (kale, spring greens, broccoli), beans, seeds, dried fruits (fig, apricot, raisins).

## Iron

Low iron intake may lead to anaemia, which is common in the UK across all dietary patterns. Men require 8.7mg, and women require 14.8mg daily. A vegan diet provides plenty of plant iron, or 'non-haem' iron, in foods such as pulses, dark green vegetables, dried fruits, nuts and seeds.

To increase iron absorption from food include sources of vitamin C. with meals e.g. peppers, broccoli, kiwi, or lemon juice.

**Avoid consuming tea or coffee with meals**



## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is needed for the body to absorb calcium and is therefore another important nutrient for bone health. The main source of vitamin D is sun exposure.

From March to October, it is recommended getting 15-20 minutes of sun exposure, 3 times per week, between 10am and 3pm, ensuring you cover your skin or apply sunscreen following this to protect you from skin damage. If you are unable to achieve this, take a 10mcg supplement of vitamin D3 daily. Supplementation all year round is recommended for those unable to have sufficient sun exposure. Those with darker skin tones may need longer in the sun.



## Vitamin B12

If you exclude all animal products from your diet, you will need to consider vitamin B12. Include 2-3 portions of B12 fortified foods (totalling a minimum of 3mg per day) such as plant milk or nutritional yeast, or take a B12 supplement (25mcg per day or at least 2000mcg per week).





**Rosie Martin Registered Dietitian**

## Cross-contamination

**Even tiny amounts of gluten can trigger a reaction in the gut.** For this reason you will need to take steps to reduce your risk of gluten cross contamination, for example:



Use separate spreads to those used by others with non-gluten free bread



Use a separate gluten free toaster, or use toaster bags

When eating out, inform the chef you have CD and check that the restaurant can reduce risk of cross contamination in the kitchen



Rinse off chopping boards and knives used with gluten containing foods before using them to prepare your meals

## What about oats?

Oats may be contaminated with gluten due to the harvesting and processing methods. Choose gluten free oats to avoid this.



Although gluten free oats are free of gluten, another protein called *avenin* is present. This protein has a similar structure to *gliadin* in gluten, and may therefore trigger an autoimmune reaction in a small number of people with CD. If you feel you react to gluten free oats you may need to avoid them.

**Consult your doctor or dietitian for further advice.**

## Simple swaps

**On a gluten free diet, wheat, rye, and barley are excluded.** It is therefore important to replace these with other, gluten free, wholegrain carbohydrates. **Base your meals on whole plant foods with plenty of gluten free wholegrains including:**

- Brown rice
- Gluten free pasta
- Gluten free bread (choose wholegrain/seeded)
- Millet
- Gluten free oats (if including)
- Buckwheat
- Sorghum
- Quinoa
- Amaranth
- Teff



Depending on where you live, you may be eligible for basic gluten free food on prescription. Check with your GP.

You can also visit **Coeliac UK** for more information on CD including symptoms, diagnosis and ongoing management at <https://www.coeliac.org.uk>.

Coeliac UK also have vegan recipes on their website.

**If you have any symptoms or concerns, seek the advice of your medical team.**