

Healthy, Confident, & Included

How you can transform the lives of children with celiac disease

*When my son Max was first diagnosed with celiac disease, I had very mixed emotions. On one hand, I was relieved that we had a diagnosis — an early one — that meant we could begin to understand and manage it. On the other hand, I was overwhelmed by the diet and worried about how he'd ever be able to safely eat without me there to check labels. **Would he be able to participate with the many school and social activities young boys need to be involved in to grow and thrive?***

But Max amazed us. Within a few months, he knew all the right questions to ask and became knowledgeable and actively involved in decisions surrounding his celiac journey. Over the past two years, Max has received so much support from Celiac Canada, family, friends, schoolmates, and of course his two brothers.

For 1 in 100 children in Canada, every meal can become a source of anxiety. Birthday parties, school lunches, and family travel can transform from fun times into isolating and potentially dangerous ones.

Life is fundamentally different because they live with celiac disease.



Without a prompt diagnosis, many children struggle with painful digestive challenges, eating and anxiety disorders, and extreme tiredness. Some medical professionals don't immediately recognize celiac disease because symptoms can vary widely, especially in children. While undergoing unnecessary tests, they continue to suffer. And left untreated, celiac disease can lead to delayed growth, anemia, and even thin bones and fractures.



Yet once a child is diagnosed, caregivers face a new challenge: navigating the social and emotional realities of managing a strict gluten-free lifestyle. Children may feel isolated or anxious in social situations involving food, and parents often wrestle with how to balance protecting their child's health with allowing them to enjoy everyday childhood experiences.

Of course, the journey doesn't end in childhood. Teens and young adults face new obstacles as they transition to independence – from living away at college, to managing mental health, food insecurity, and stigma around their dietary needs.

But every child deserves the chance to grow up healthy, confident, and included.



Your investment in Celiac Canada improves life for children and families throughout their celiac journey. With the right support, families can help children build confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

You can give more children the tools to enjoy life fully:

Increase outreach to medical professionals (\$10,000), particularly about non-classic celiac symptoms and emerging research. This will improve diagnosis rates and reduce the diagnosis gap, preventing needless suffering and unnecessary medical tests.

*\$10,000
physician
outreach*

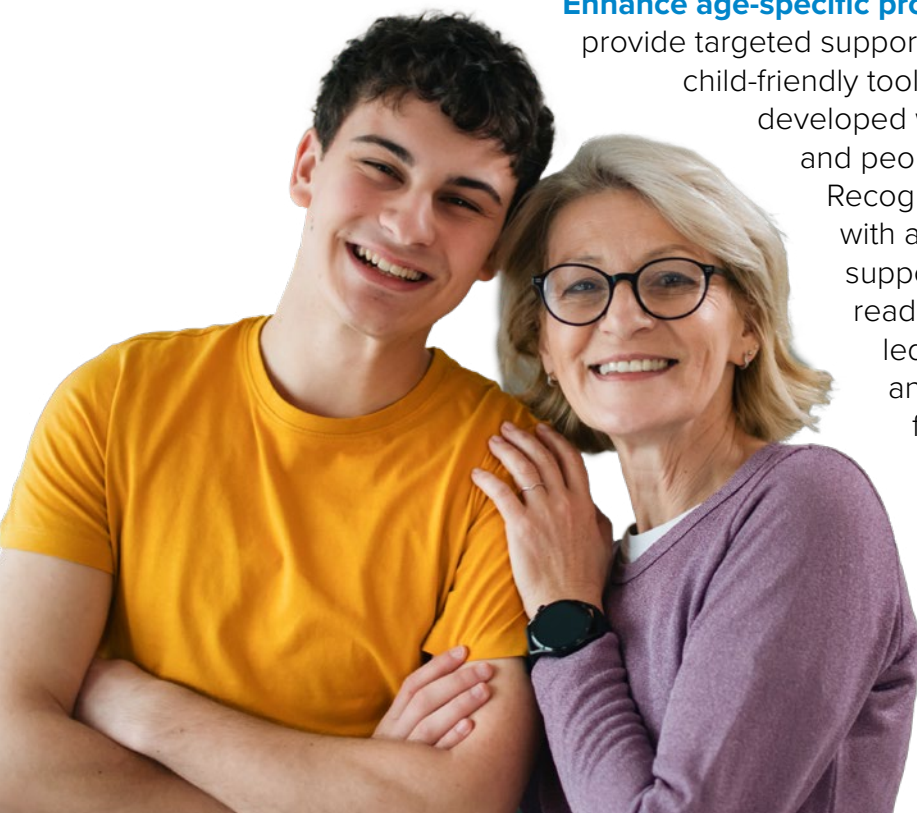
Deepen research and understanding (\$25,000+) to better understand the disease and children's needs. In 2026, Celiac Canada is launching the first-ever **State of Celiac Disease in Children Survey** – a groundbreaking study to assess quality of life, emotional well-being, and access to safe food for children with celiac disease across Canada. This vital research will provide the data needed to guide our next phase of programming and advocacy, ensuring we're meeting the real needs of youth and their families.

*\$25,000+
research*

Enhance age-specific programming (\$10,000) to provide targeted support. We've created a suite of child-friendly tools, videos, and resources developed with input from dietitians and people with lived experience.

Recognizing that challenges evolve with age, we're expanding our support to include post-secondary readiness resources and peer-led engagement tools for teens and young adults. Further, with findings from our research, we plan to launch new programming specifically tailored to the needs that children and families identify.

*\$10,000
age-specific
programs*



You can help children and families find community, gain confidence, and navigate social situations with less fear.

Together, let's:

- Improve diagnosis rates and reduce unnecessary suffering
- Welcome children into a support network, reminding them that they're not alone
- Reduce anxiety for both caregivers and children, giving them tools to manage real-life situations
- Create additional targeted resources that truly meet their needs
- Support young people as they transition to independence

The children in our community deserve to experience the full joy of childhood.

*Will you give more children
the chance to thrive?*

You can help children with celiac disease live well – at home, at school, and into adulthood.

What's next? Let's talk.

Contact Celiac Canada today with any questions, or to make a donation or pledge. We look forward to the conversation, whether in person, online, or over the phone.

