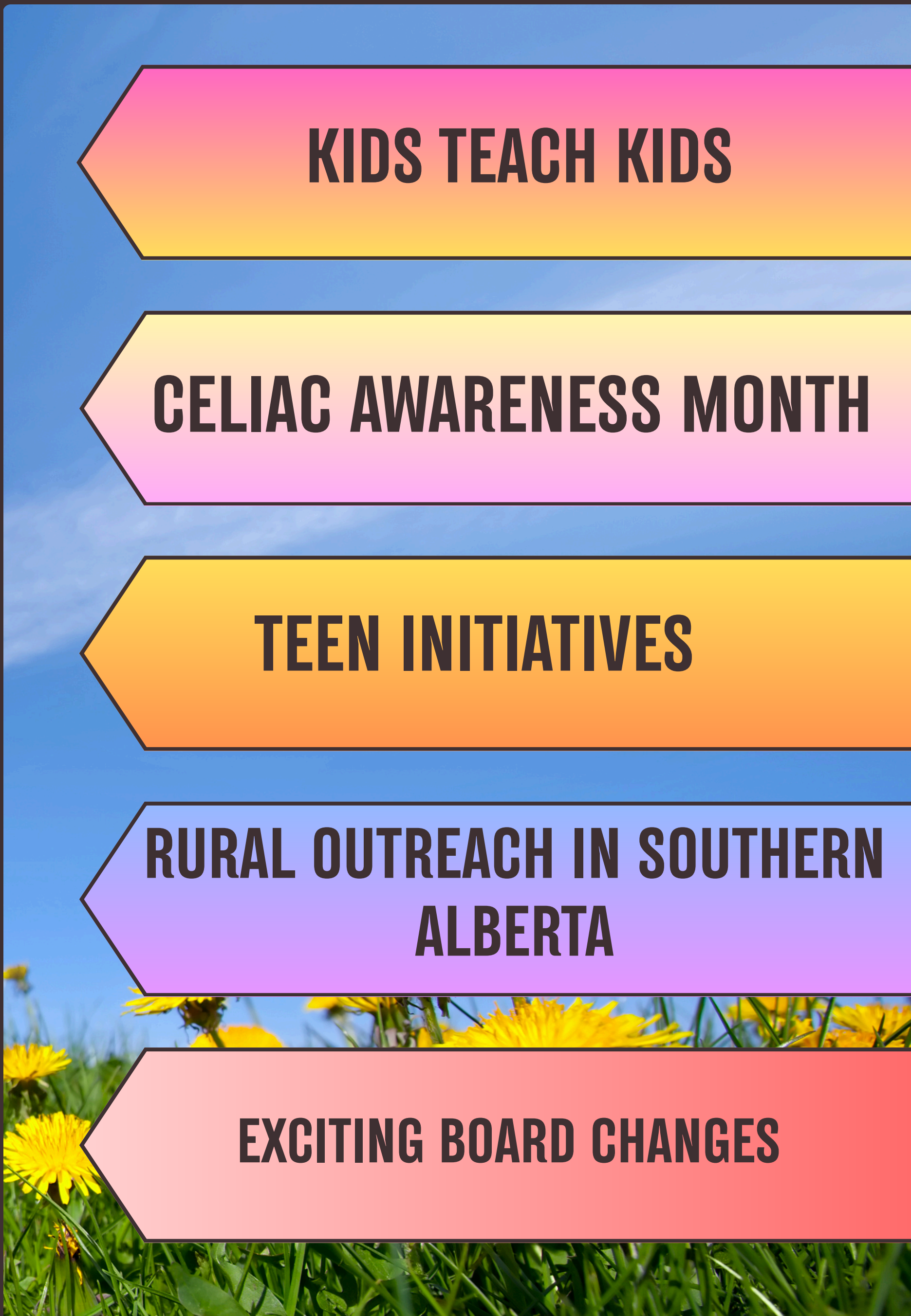
SPRING 2026

Vol. 02

CELIAC CALGARY

NEWSLETTER



KIDS TEACH KIDS

CELIAC AWARENESS MONTH

TEEN INITIATIVES

RURAL OUTREACH IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA

EXCITING BOARD CHANGES

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CELIAC CALGARY

The Calgary Celiac Association serves our local community through programs of awareness, advocacy, community events, education and research. We are a chapter of Celiac Canada.

CONNECT WITH US

OFFICE HOURS

Tues and Thurs
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Visitors by appointment only.

GENERAL INQUIRES

403-237-0304
info@calgaryceliac.ca

OUR TEAM

President
Lisa Cerato
president@calgaryceliac.ca

Incoming President:
Janet Lymer

Vice President
Bethany Saunders

Treasurer
Brooke Barrett

Secretary
Daphne Nakhid

Directors at Large
Kristin Stringer
Dana Hagg
Bob MacEwan
Sonya Hope
Janice Taylor
James Gaby

Charity Administrator
Dee Murphy

Event Coordinator
Mainey Cookson

Bookkeeper
Courtney Brown

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Lisa Cerato

May is always a special time for our community, but this year it feels especially meaningful.

Celiac Awareness Month is a time to elevate voices, share stories, and strengthen connections, and here at the Calgary Celiac Association, we are doing just that. Our calendar is fuller than ever, with new and unique events, expanded education opportunities, and meaningful ways for our community to come together.

From local gatherings to larger initiatives like the Shine A Light Campaign and our participation in the Calgary Marathon Charity Challenge, we are not only raising awareness, but we are also building momentum. Every conversation, every event, and every step forward helps create a safer, more informed world for those living gluten-free.

One of the things I am most proud of this year is the growth of our rural outreach efforts. We are actively building community networks in Medicine Hat and Lethbridge, creating spaces for connection, support, and shared learning. These communities matter deeply, and ensuring access to resources and support beyond Calgary has been an important priority.

This month's message also marks a transition. I am incredibly pleased to announce that Janet Lymer will be stepping into the role of President of the Calgary Celiac Association. Janet brings passion, thoughtfulness, and a deep commitment to this community, and I have full confidence in her leadership as the organization moves into its next chapter. For me, this is my final message as President.

Serving in this role has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. I have had the privilege of meeting so many incredible individuals. People who are resilient, generous, and deeply committed to supporting one another. This community is truly something special.

While I am stepping away from the President role, I am not going far. I will remain involved as a passionate volunteer, continuing to support rural outreach and community-building efforts that are close to my heart.

As I reflect on this transition, I'm reminded of a hiking journey. There are seasons where the climb is steep, where the path requires focus, effort, and perseverance. And then there are moments when you reach a new height, where you can pause, take in the view, and recognize how far you've come. This feels like one of those moments.

I am excited for what lies ahead, for the organization, for this community, and personally, as I begin to invest more time into new business ventures and continue my own journey toward health and balance.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and for allowing me to be part of your journey.

With gratitude,

Lisa

Janet Lymer is the incoming Chapter President of the Calgary Celiac Association. She is a seasoned nonprofit executive with extensive experience in leadership, strategic communications, community engagement, and fundraising. A Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), Janet is also a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Canadian Association of Gift Planners (CAGP). She is recognized for her professionalism, sound judgment, and deep commitment to mission-driven work. She has dedicated much of her career to serving others, strengthening communities, and giving voice to causes that matter.

Janet's connection to the celiac community is deeply personal. Following her own health challenges and eventual diagnosis with celiac disease, she developed a strong appreciation for the importance of education, advocacy, and practical support for individuals and families navigating a gluten-free life. Janet brings to this role a combination of executive leadership experience, personal insight, and community-minded service. As Chapter President, she is committed to helping the Calgary Celiac Association continue to grow as a trusted, welcoming, and informed voice for the community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

04
MAY

LETHBRIDGE FOCUS GROUP

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Lethbridge Public Library - Main Branch

06
MAY

MEDICINE HAT FOCUS GROUP

7:00 - 8:30 PM
Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub

13
MAY

KIDS TEACH KIDS DAY

IN CLASSROOMS ACROSS CANADA

14
MAY

PEDAL PUB

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Inglewood

16
MAY

CELIAC AWARENESS DAY

LIGHT UP AIRDRIE, LETHBRIDGE & MEDICINE HAT IN GREEN

16
MAY

MEDICINE HAT PANCAKE BREAKFAST

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
The She Shed

16
MAY

CALGARY CELIAC COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE & BOTTLE DRIVE

Calgary Celiac Association
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

21
MAY

CELIAC 101

7:00 - 8:30 PM
Calgary Celiac Association

21
MAY

LIGHT UP CALGARY IN GREEN
CALGARY TOWER & TELUS SCIENCE CENTRE

23/24
MAY

CALGARY MARATHON

Downtown Calgary
Online

30
MAY

MISS P'S PANCAKE BREAKFAST

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Miss P's Bakery

05
JUN

TEEN MEETUP

7:00 - 9:00 PM
Glitch Gaming Lounge

19
JUN

SAIT DINNER

6:00 - 10:00 PM
SAIT Pop up Restaurant

04
JUL

WENDY T'S PANCAKE BREAKFAST

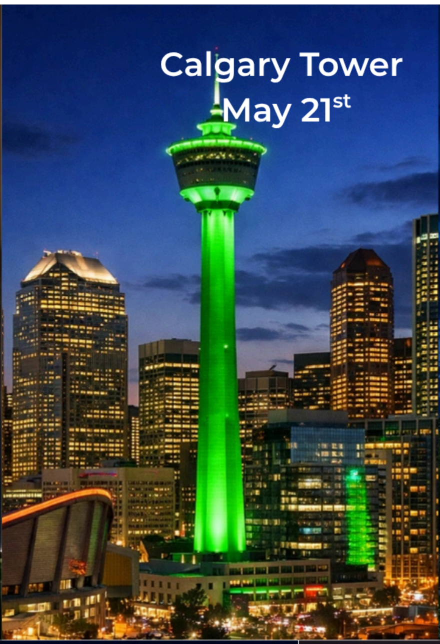
10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Parkdale Community Centre

To stay up-to-date on CCA events, check our website, sign up for our email updates, or follow us on social media @calgaryceliac.

LIGHT UP FOR CELIAC AWARENESS

Lighting up landmarks in green is a great way to spark conversation and raise visibility for celiac awareness. Buildings and public spaces glow green to show support for those living with celiac disease. This simple gesture helps bring people together, encourages learning, and reminds those affected that they are seen, supported, and not alone. The Calgary Celiac Association has partnered with the cities listed below.

Medicine Hat Saamis Tepee
May 16th



Calgary Tower
May 21st

Lethbridge City Hall
May 16th

Airdrie City Hall
May 16th

Telus Science Centre
May 21st

Take pictures and share on social media using the hashtag #shinealightonceliac

Calgary Celiac Association Teen Initiative

Being a teen with celiac disease comes with challenges that go beyond food. Social events, school, travel, even just hanging out with friends can feel complicated when you're constantly thinking about what's safe to eat.

The Calgary Celiac Association's Teen Initiative was created to help change that. The program is focused on building connection, confidence, and a sense of belonging for teens navigating life gluten-free. Because it's not just about avoiding gluten; it's about feeling included.

We want to better understand what teens are really experiencing and what support would make the biggest difference in their day-to-day lives. We're inviting teens to continue to share their thoughts and experiences through our survey

Teen Survey

If you have a teen and would like to learn more, we've included some links recommended by our education committee below.

Study by Simon Gidrewicz, Renert School (Calgary): Living with Celiac: Why Teens Struggle to Stay Gluten Free. Simon Gidrewicz - Renert School 2024-2025 Calgary Youth Science Fair

Watch & Learn: Beyond Celiac :The road to celiac disease diagnosis and management from youth to college selection

Listening to Our Teens: What We Learned About Living Gluten-Free

By Bethany Saunders and the Education Committee

The Calgary Celiac Association recently asked teens and parents to share their experiences living gluten-free—and which programs would actually make a difference. With a significant number of responses, the results provide a clearer picture of the real challenges teens face and the kinds of support they want.

These findings closely reflect broader Canadian research. A national study highlighted by Celiac Canada found that many teens face ongoing challenges such as accidental gluten exposure (75.3%) and feeling left out (66.7%), with 39% saying they might eat gluten if they had no symptoms—underscoring the social pressures that come with managing celiac disease. The Calgary Celiac Association recently asked teens and parents to share their experiences living gluten-free—and which programs would actually make a difference. With a significant number of responses, the results provide a clearer picture of the real challenges teens face and the kinds of support they want.
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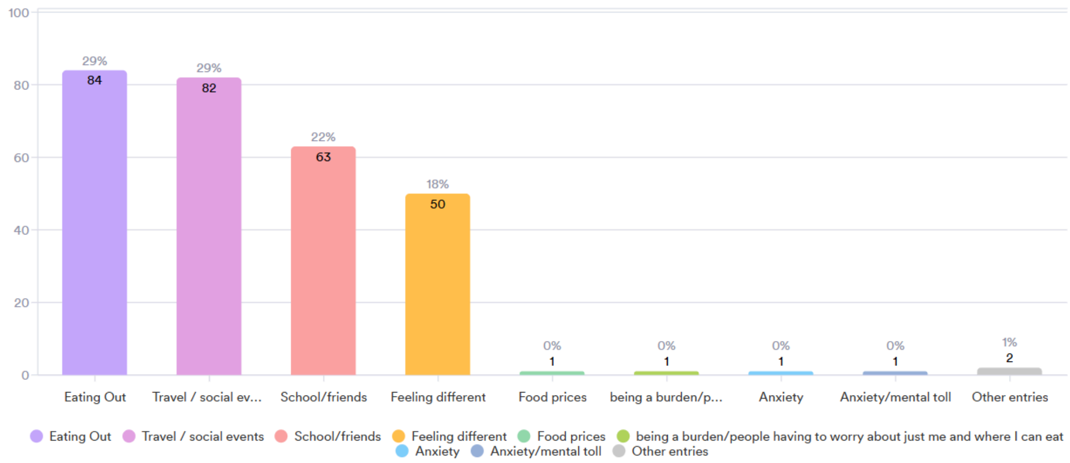
What Teens Wish Existed

With 89 responses, teens shared a wide range of ideas, but several clear themes emerged:

- More affordable and accessible gluten-free food
- Better gluten-free options at schools, restaurants, and fast-food locations
- Support groups and opportunities to connect with other teens.
- Help navigating travel and social situations.
- Dedicated teen-focused programs, events, or even trips

Many responses emphasized the need for better access, less stigma, and more connection with others who understand their experience.

The Hardest Parts of Being Gluten-Free as a Teen



From 285 responses, teens identified the biggest day-to-day challenges:

- Eating out – 29% (84 responses)
- Travel and social events – 29% (82 responses)
- School and friendships – 22% (63 responses)
- Feeling different – 18% (50 responses)

These results reinforce how strongly food and social life are connected—and how difficult it can be for teens to feel included.

Events Teens Actually Want

When asked what kinds of events they would attend (237 responses), teens preferred social, interactive, and food-centered experiences:

- Cooking or food nights – 29% (69 responses)
- Games or social nights – 23% (55 responses)
- Teen meetups – 21% (49 responses)
- Workshops with real-life tips – 16% (37 responses)
- Online hangouts – 11% (27 responses)

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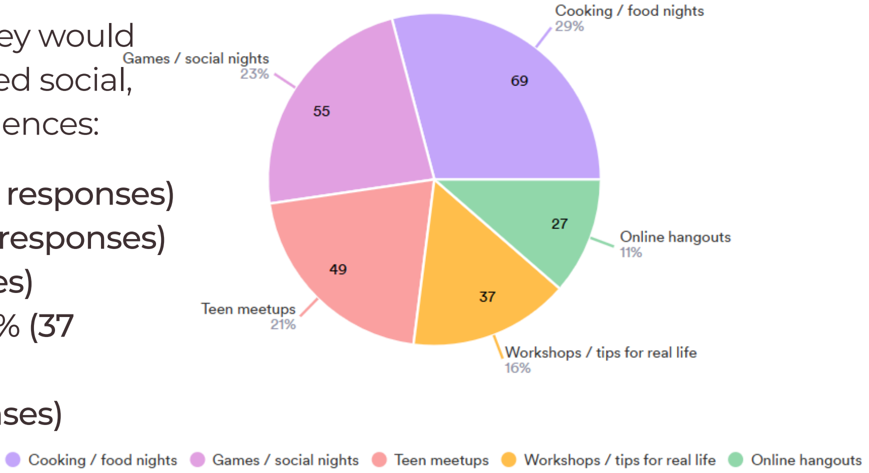

These results highlight a strong desire for in-person connection, especially in safe environments where food is not a source of stress

What Makes an Event Feel Safe and Fun

Across 79 responses, one theme stood out clearly: safety around food is essential. Teens said events feel better when there is:

- Guaranteed gluten-free food
- No risk of cross-contamination
- Plenty of food options
- A dedicated safe space to eat.
- Inclusive and comfortable environments

Creating a space where teens don't have to question what they're eating allows them to relax and fully participate.

Out of 101 total responses, the majority of participants were between the ages of 15–17, representing 76% (77 respondents), while 24% (24 respondents) were between the ages of 12–14. Notably, most of the surveys (93%) were completed directly by teens, with the remaining 7% submitted by parents or caregivers on their behalf.

Looking Ahead

The message from teens is clear: living with celiac disease is not just about avoiding gluten—it's about navigating social situations, feeling included, and having access to safe, affordable food.
With these insights, the Calgary Celiac Association is excited to build more opportunities for teens to connect, learn practical skills, and enjoy safe, gluten-free experiences together!
If you have ideas for teen programming or would like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you!

Sources: https://www.celiac.ca/teens-challenges-in-diagnosis/

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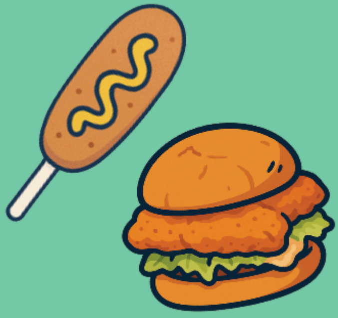
Sweet Rice
Oakridge (South)
#9 3109 Palliser Dr SW
Open Wed - Sun



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GLUTEN
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TEENS MAKING A DIFFERENCE: SUPPORTING THE CELIAC COMMUNITY IN CALGARY

A conversation with Morgan Farnell

By Dee Murphy

I had the pleasure of interviewing Morgan for our Teens Initiative and also had the opportunity to work alongside him at a GF Market. It was really inspiring to hear his perspective on living gluten-free as a teen and to see how openly he shares his experiences. At the market, he brought a lot of energy and positivity, and it was clear how comfortable he was connecting with others in the community. It was a great reminder of how much young volunteers like Morgan contribute to making these events so welcoming and meaningful.

At 14 years old, Morgan has already been living with celiac disease for several years after being diagnosed at age 8. Prior to his diagnosis, he experienced symptoms such as a rash around his mouth, a quick temper and difficulty regulating his emotions, though he did not have more typical symptoms like vomiting. After concerns were raised, his family doctor recommended further testing, which led to a biopsy and diagnosis. Morgan was the first in his family to be diagnosed with celiac disease, marking the start of a new journey for both him and his family.

What has been your experience of managing a gluten free diet in the teenage years?

I had to depend on my parents to feed me when I was younger. I am more social as a teen, I go to parties and hang outs, “bring your own bun” gets lonely at times. I always make sure I have food, even something small, in case of situations when there is nothing gluten free.

How do you handle explaining celiac disease to friends?

Simplifying it, hey I can’t eat these foods that most people eat – bread, pizza, basically anything Italian and I know that not a lot of people know about it, I would really appreciate it if you can help me out when hanging out with people

Do you have any strategies have helped you feel more confident navigating social situations?
Making friends aware, so they are not offering me food I can't eat. I always try to carry something gluten free in my bag. Social situations usually have food, this way I can join in..

What has been the most challenging part of living gluten-free?
Following both a gluten-free and vegetarian diet has been especially challenging, particularly when eating out or travelling. It often means carefully checking ingredients and even learning or translating words for wheat, gluten, and vegetarian in different languages to make sure the food is safe and won't make me sick.
Even in Calgary, restaurants aren't invested in making it a priority.

Why do you think awareness initiatives (like lighting landmarks green) are important?
The more places that know about what people can't eat, the more effort they will make to understand and help people with celiac disease get through that. If there is awareness with regular people, it will make the world a safer place for everyone.

Why did you want to volunteer with The Calgary Celiac Association?
I wanted to help people. I started volunteering at 12 with the CCA. I also volunteer with other organisations (CPL and Volunteer corps). I think that helping people who have the same affliction as me, made the CCA a very obvious choice.

What has been your most memorable experience volunteering?
The Gluten Free Stampede breakfast – Every year I see how much it means to people to be able to go to a stampede breakfast, see people laughing and chatting and having a good time, feels just as great as going down to the stampede grounds for a pancake breakfast.

What would you say to a teen considering volunteering with The Calgary Celiac Association?
If you're celiac, it's really cool because you get to help people your age (and all ages) who are going through the same thing and could really use your support. And if you're not celiac and just want to volunteer, that's awesome too—everyone is super welcoming, and it's a really great community where you can feel like you belong.

What skills or experiences have you gained through volunteering?
Throughout my journey as a CCA volunteer, I've gained a lot more social skills. I am able to talk to people in my day to day life. I have no more social anxiety, which is such a gift, just from talking to people at events, other volunteers.

What advice would you give to a teen who is newly diagnosed?
Check the labels, and be an advocate for yourself. I've struggled with telling people what I need, which led to a lot of hungry birthday parties. Make sue you are getting what you need.

How do you stay positive and motivated?
I don't think there is one thing, I do find myself thinking, I react to gluten, but not as much as others, there are always people worse off than me. Keeping that in mind helps me a lot.

Can you highlight any positive aspects (silver linings!) of having celiac disease?
Discovering new food is amazing, every time I go to the grocery store, I find new things I can eat. Things that are more delicious than things that contain gluten!


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GLUTEN FREE BEER • BIÈRE SANS GLUTEN
Alc./Vol. 5.0% 18 IBU 355ml
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QUICK WITTED
BELGIAN WIT
GLUTEN FREE BEER • BIÈRE SANS GLUTEN
Alc./Vol. 5.0% 15 IBU 355ml
GREY FOX BREWING
BUCKWILD STOUT
BUCKWHEAT STOUT
GLUTEN FREE BEER • BIÈRE SANS GLUTEN
Alc./Vol. 5.0% 23 IBU 355ml
GREY FOX BREWING
PROLIFIC PALE
BELGIAN PALE ALE
GLUTEN FREE BEER • BIÈRE SANS GLUTEN
Alc./Vol. 5.0% 34 IBU 355ml

EXPANDING OUR REACH: RURAL OUTREACH IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA

Building Celiac Support Networks in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat

At the Calgary Celiac Association (CCA), we recognize that living with celiac disease extends far beyond city boundaries. Access to safe food, reliable information, and a supportive community can be significantly more challenging in rural and smaller urban centres. That's why we are excited to share a key priority within our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan: expanding our reach across Southern Alberta to better support individuals and families living with celiac disease.

A Strategic Step Forward

This rural outreach initiative directly supports several pillars of our strategic plan, including:

Community Support & Engagement
Creating inclusive, connected communities where individuals feel supported and understood

Education & Awareness
Increasing knowledge of celiac disease and the gluten-free diet across diverse regions

Advocacy & Partnerships
Building relationships with local stakeholders to improve access, safety, and quality of life

By extending our presence into Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, we are taking meaningful steps toward ensuring that no one feels isolated in their celiac journey, regardless of where they live.

Building Local Connections

Over the past several months, we have begun re-engaging with individuals, volunteers, and community leaders in both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. These early conversations have been incredibly encouraging, highlighting both the need and the enthusiasm for stronger local connections.

Our approach is rooted in collaboration and relationship-building. We are actively working to:

- Connect with local community members interested in volunteering and leadership roles
- Establish partnerships with healthcare providers, dietitians, and community organizations
- Engage with local businesses including grocery stores, restaurants, and food service providers, to promote gluten-free awareness and safety
- Explore opportunities for local events, education sessions, and community gatherings

These relationships are essential to building sustainable, community-driven support networks that reflect the unique needs of each region.

Introducing Peer Support Groups – Fall 2026

One of the most exciting developments is the planned launch of peer support groups in both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, with pilot programs set to begin in Fall 2026.

- A safe and welcoming space for individuals and families to share experiences
- Opportunities for connection, mentorship, and practical support
- Access to resources and facilitated discussions on navigating life with celiac disease

Peer support has been identified as a critical need through our community engagement efforts, and we are proud to bring this initiative to Southern Alberta as part of our broader commitment to meaningful, person-centered support.

Enhancing Access Through Digital Connection

To further support these growing communities, we will be developing dedicated webpages for both Lethbridge and Medicine Hat on the CCA website.

- Upcoming events and community gatherings
- Peer support group information and registration
- Local gluten-free resources and trusted businesses
- Educational materials tailored to each region

This digital presence will help bridge geographic gaps and ensure that individuals can easily access relevant, local information.

Looking Ahead

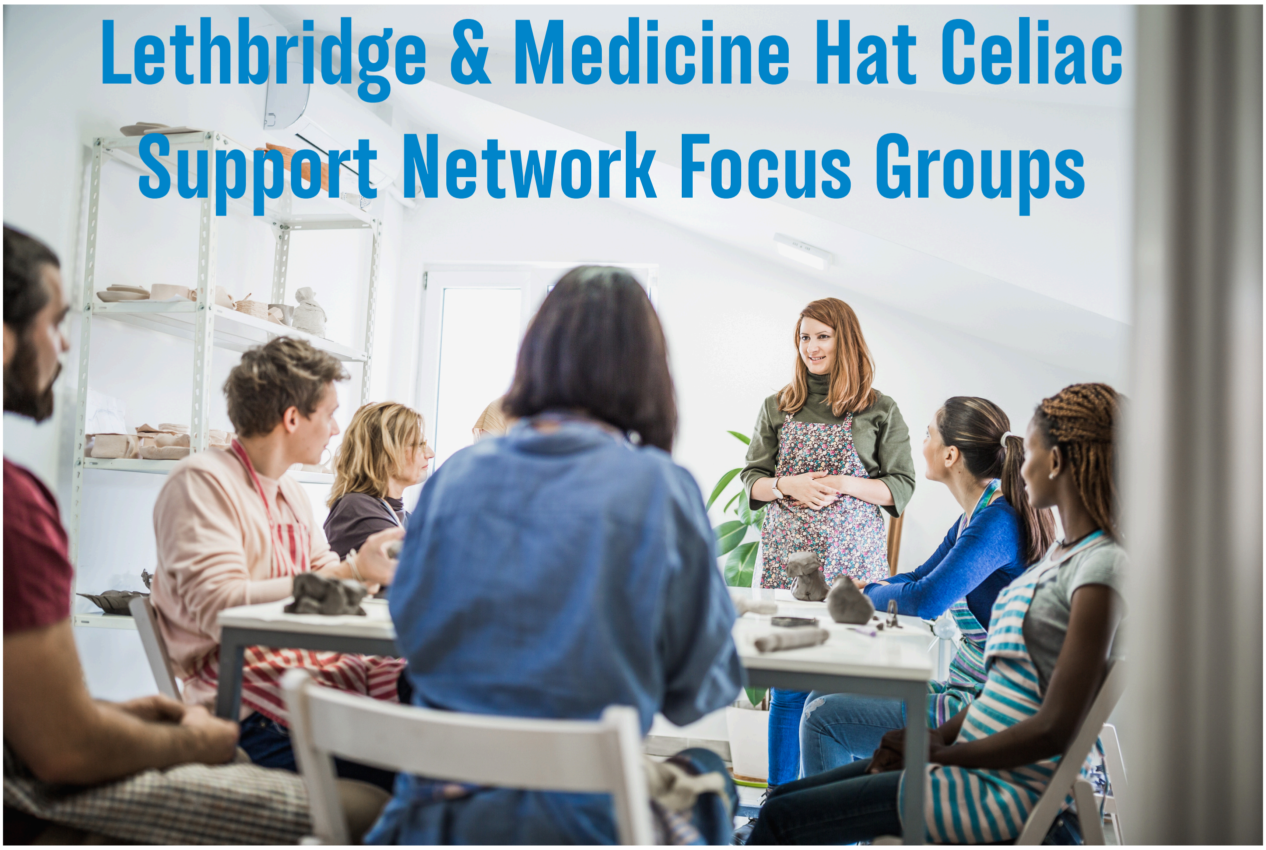
This is just the beginning. Our vision is to cultivate thriving, self-sustaining celiac support networks across Southern Alberta, grounded in community leadership and supported by the broader CCA framework.

We are deeply grateful to the individuals who have already stepped forward to share their experiences, offer their time, and help shape this initiative. Your voices are guiding this work, and your communities are at the heart of it.

If you live in Lethbridge or Medicine Hat and are interested in getting involved, whether through volunteering, attending future events, or participating in a peer support group, we would love to hear from you.

Together, we are building stronger, more connected communities - one conversation at a time.

Lethbridge & Medicine Hat Celiac Support Network Focus Groups



Join us for a relaxed, small-group discussion where you can share your experiences, challenges, and ideas related to living with celiac disease or following a gluten-free diet. Your input will help shape how the Calgary Celiac Association (CCA) can better support individuals in Lethbridge and surrounding rural communities.

Lethbridge Celiac Support Network
A Calgary Celiac Community Initiative

Date: May 4, 2026
Time: 6:00pm to 7:30pm
Location: Lethbridge Public Library Main Branch 810 5 Ave S, Lethbridge AB

Register here

Medicine Hat Celiac Support Network
A Calgary Celiac Community Initiative

Date: May 6, 2026
Time: 7:00pm to 8:30pm
Location: Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub 440 Maple Ave SE, Medicine Hat AB

Register here

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Sweet Rice **now available at Eight Ounce Coffee**

STEPS TOWARD SUPPORT:

MILES WITH MEANING | CALGARY MARATHON 2026

We're proud to be participating in the Calgary Marathon as part of the **Charity Challenge** in support of the Calgary Celiac Association.

Participants can choose between the in-person race weekend on May 23 & 24 or the virtual race experience running from May 25 to June 21.

Choose your distance and take part your way:

Saturday Events: 5 km, 10 km, Kids Race, Diaper Dash

Sunday Events: 21.1 km (1/2 Marathon), 42.2 km (Marathon)

When you participate in this iconic Calgary event, you're doing more than crossing a finish line, you're helping raise awareness and funds for individuals and families affected by celiac disease and gluten-related disorders. All donations in support of our team are made directly through our official Charity Challenge profile page, ensuring your contribution makes an immediate impact.

REGISTER HERE

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Wescana's Gluten-Free Banana Bread

Ingredients:

- 2-3 very ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- Pinch salt
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 ½ Cup Wescana Foods Oat Flour

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Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 4 x 8 loaf pan with cooking spray.
- In a mixing bowl, mash the ripe bananas until smooth.
- Add the baking soda to the mashed bananas.
- Stir the melted butter into the mashed bananas.
- Stir in the sugar, salt, eggs, and pure vanilla extract..
- Mix in the oat flour.
- Pour the batter into the greased loaf pan.
- Bake on the center rack for 50 minutes to 1 hour or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
- Cool completely before slicing.
- Enjoy!

You can find more delicious recipes on ou
Instagram @Wescana.Foods

EMPOWERING OUR KIDS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN A GLUTEN-FREE WORLD

By L. Cerato

Recently, Celiac Canada hosted a powerful and practical webinar titled “Empowering Our Kids: Thoughts, Feelings, and Confidence in a Gluten-Free World,” featuring clinical psychologist Dr. Dina Abi. The session offered meaningful guidance for parents navigating the emotional and practical realities of raising children with celiac disease. At its core, the webinar emphasized an important shift: while food safety is essential, so is helping children build confidence, independence, and resilience in a world that isn’t always gluten-free.

UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

A diagnosis of celiac disease impacts the whole family. Parents often experience anxiety, fear, and even guilt, especially when thinking about their child’s safety in social settings, school environments, or travel.

Dr. Abi reminded us that anxiety itself is not the enemy, it’s a signal meant to protect us. However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, it can unintentionally lead to over-restriction, limiting a child’s experiences and confidence.

> ” *The goal is balance: staying vigilant while still allowing children to participate fully in life.* ”

PARENTS AS EMOTIONAL ROLE MODELS

One of the most powerful takeaways was how closely children mirror their parents’ emotional responses.

When parents approach situations calmly and confidently, children are more likely to feel safe and capable. Even subtle cues like tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions can shape how children interpret risk.

> ***Calm parents help create calm, confident kids.***

FINDING THE “JUST RIGHT” BALANCE

Dr. Abi described a “Goldilocks” approach to gluten-free living:

- Too restrictive: avoiding restaurants, travel, or social events
- Too relaxed: increasing risk of gluten exposure

The goal is the “just right” balance: where children are safe and still able to participate. Sometimes that looks like:

- Bringing a gluten-free cupcake to a birthday party
- Attending a restaurant and ordering a drink
- Participating socially even when food isn’t the focus

> ***These experiences help children learn that connection and inclusion matter just as much as what’s on their plate.***

SUPPORTING KIDS THROUGH TOUGH MOMENTS

It’s normal for children to feel disappointed when they can’t eat the same foods as their peers. Helpful responses include acknowledging feelings though empathy, offering alternatives, and normalizing the experience without minimizing it.

> ***All these build emotional resilience, an essential part of long-term well-being.***

CALGARY CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

From a Calgary Celiac Association perspective, this webinar strongly reinforces several priorities we are actively working on:

Building Confident, Connected Kids

Our events, like family gatherings, youth programming, and upcoming initiatives, are designed to give children safe spaces to practice social confidence while living gluten-free.

Supporting Parents, Not Just Patients

We recognize that empowering kids starts with supporting parents. Conversations like this highlight the need for more parent-focused education, peer support, and shared strategies within our community.

Expanding Real-World Experiences

Whether it's community events, camps, or local partnerships, we continue to create opportunities where children can safely navigate real-life situations, building both independence and resilience

FINAL THOUGHTS

Living gluten-free comes with challenges, but it also offers opportunities to build strength, confidence, and lifelong skills. By modelling calm behaviour, teaching practical strategies, and allowing children to engage in real-world experiences, we can help raise a generation that is not only safe, but empowered.

We extend our thanks to Celiac Canada and webinar sponsor O'Doughs for continuing to support education and connection within the gluten-free community.

Kids Teach Kids

Kids Teach Kids Day is a national initiative led by Celiac Canada, and we're proud to play our part right here in Calgary and across Alberta.

As a chapter, we are empowering young leaders by providing Kids Teach Kids kits designed to help them feel confident, prepared, and excited to share their experiences. These kits give children the tools they need to educate their classmates about celiac disease and gluten-free living in a meaningful and relatable way.

Each kit includes:

- Printed awareness resources
- A Celiac Awareness T-shirt to wear proudly
- Cookies to share with the class
- A certificate celebrating their leadership upon completion

This initiative goes beyond raising awareness, it's about giving children a voice, building confidence, and fostering understanding among their peers about what it truly means to live gluten-free.

Together, we can make a difference—one brave and impactful voice at a time

To sign up or learn more, please email: admin@calgaryceliac.ca

RESEARCH ROUND-UP

Canadian Digestive Disease Week 2026

By Quinn Goddard & James King

Earlier this year, scientists and physicians from across Canada gathered to share their research at Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW), a national gastroenterology conference. Below, we've summarized a selection of the fascinating research on celiac disease that was presented! Please keep in mind many results presented at these conferences include preliminary findings and typically undergo more detailed analyses following feedback from attendees and colleagues. Therefore, the information below could be subject to change based on additional work carried out by investigators of which we will aim to update once published! One study (by Calgary researchers) investigated all births in Alberta from 2012–2021, and found that infants who had been given antibiotics or who had had an infection early in life were at greater risk of later developing celiac disease based on antibodies from the blood test. Similarly, another study out of Alberta found that people were testing positive with celiac antibodies at a higher rate after the pandemic, although this might be due to many people going undiagnosed during COVID when access to healthcare was less available.

Another abstract looked at all published studies on eosinophilic esophagitis in individuals with celiac and found that a much higher proportion of people with celiac (compared to the general population) have eosinophilic esophagitis. This should provide comfort to the members of our community who live with eosinophilic esophagitis that they are not alone!

Despite following a strict gluten free diet, many people with celiac still suffer from symptoms like bloating or abdominal pain; one study out of McMaster University (a known centre for celiac-related research) found a fair number of individuals with celiac (15%) have small-intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO). They found that symptoms resolved for some of the SIBO-impacted individuals after antibiotics, which may provide a promising treatment option.

Finally, the gluten-free diet itself was the subject of several abstracts. One qualitative study (meaning it was more interview-based) sought to find challenges that people with celiac face when it comes to sticking to a gluten free diet—a whopping 74% of participants reported experiencing stigma because of their diet!

They found that social pressure, risk of cross-contamination, gluten-y cravings, barriers with cultural/traditional foods, and financial or workplace constraints consistently provided challenges. Another large study (using results from an online survey that many of you may have participated in!) looked at demographic factors associated with celiac symptoms across Canada.

They found that participants who were female, white, low-income, or lived in a rural area often had more celiac-related symptoms. Females were also less likely to recover from certain symptoms, like iron deficiency, weakness/tiredness, bloating, abdominal pain, and anxiety.

It's an exciting time for research in celiac disease! We'll be back with info on more new studies in the next Research Roundup.

Disclaimer and Exclusion of Liability

We report on evidence from various peer-reviewed studies and our ongoing research on celiac disease. However, in these reports we also take this evidence into forming our own considerations on how to interpret these findings. These views are informed by our perspectives as epidemiological researcher, our interactions with those in the celiac disease community, and as celiac disease patients in the healthcare system. We do not have medical training and therefore can not make clinical recommendations for individual health concerns.

Contact: If you have any comments, questions, or general feedback about this article, or would like to see certain research topics discussed, please contact jamking@ucalgary.ca.

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SWEET & FRESH: CELEBRATING STRAWBERRY SEASON

Strawberry season is almost here, bringing with it one of the freshest and most delicious flavours of spring in Alberta. Whether you're enjoying them straight from the basket or adding them into your favourite dishes, strawberries are as versatile as they are vibrant.

In this collection, we're highlighting a few simple ways to enjoy them at their best. These recipes are easy to make, perfect for sharing, and a great way to celebrate the season.

STRAWBERRY RHUBARB CRUMBLE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. fresh grated lemon zest
- 4 cups thinly sliced & diced rhubarb
- 3 cups sliced fresh strawberries

Topping:

- 1 cup gluten-free flour
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup gluten-free rolled oats
- 1/2 cup salted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375°. Spray a glass or ceramic 9x13 baking dish with cooking spray or coat lightly with butter.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the sugar and cornstarch.
- Add the lemon zest, sliced strawberries and rhubarb and stir together with a spatula until fruit is all coated with sugar mixture.
- Spread the fruit mixture into the 9x13 baking dish.
- Measure the gluten-free flour, brown sugar, butter and oats into a medium sized bowl. Use a pastry blender to mix together until butter pieces are pea-sized. (You can also do this step in a food processor: pulse together the flour, brown sugar and butter until butter is in pea-sized pieces, then add the oats and pulse until just mixed.)
- Crumble oat mixture on top of the fruit mixture.
- Bake 45-50 minutes in a 375° oven, or until lightly browned and crisp.

STRAWBERRY BREAKFAST CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ¾ cups (245 g) all purpose gluten free flour blend,
- ¾ teaspoon xanthan gum, omit if your blend already contains it
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons (56 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 9 tablespoons (130 g) plain whole milk or lowfat yogurt, at room temperature
- 2 eggs, at room temperature, beaten
- 1 ¼ cups fresh roughly chopped strawberries, from 8 to 10 strawberries that are washed, hulled, dried and chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch baking pan

- In a large bowl, place the flour, xanthan gum, baking powder, baking soda, salt and sugar, and whisk to combine well.
- Create a well in the center of the dry ingredients and add the butter, yogurt and eggs, mixing to combine after each addition. The batter will be thick.
- Add 1 cup of the chopped strawberries and mix gently until the strawberries are evenly distributed throughout the dough, taking care not to crush the strawberries.
- Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and spread into an even layer with a wet spatula. Scatter the remaining 1/4 cup chopped strawberries over the top of the batter, pressing them gently into the batter.
- Place the pan in the center of the preheated oven and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean and the top is very lightly golden brown (about 25 minutes).
- Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the pan for 10 minutes before lifting out by the overhung parchment paper and placing on a wire rack to cool (peeling off the parchment from the bottom of the cake if possible).
- Allow the cake to cool completely before serving.

STRAWBERRY SALAD WITH MIXED GREENS, PECANS AND FETA

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups spring mix
- 2 cups California Strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, whole or coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup good quality feta cheese, sliced or crumbled
- Optional: 1/4 cup quick pickled shallots
- Fresh ground black pepper for serving

Stone Ground Mustard Vinaigrette

- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar (red wine vinegar may be substituted
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon stone ground mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper, or to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large bowl, combine the spring mix, strawberries, pecans, feta cheese, and quick pickled shallots, if using.
- In a small bowl, whisk together the sherry vinegar, olive oil, honey, mustard, salt and pepper. Taste and adjust flavors if desired.
- Add about 1/2 to 3/4 of the dressing to the salad ingredients and gently toss until evenly combined. Taste and add the remaining dressing, if desired.
- Divide between 4 salad plates. Top each with some freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately

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We're inviting members of our senior community to take part in our Seniors Survey to help us better understand your experiences living gluten-free. Your feedback will guide future programs, resources, and supports designed specifically with seniors in mind. Whether you've been living gluten-free for years or are newly diagnosed, your input is incredibly valuable. Please consider taking a few minutes to share your thoughts.