



1st May, 2024

Mr. David Stanton, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 18364/24

To ask the Minister for Health the measures being undertaken by his Department to promote awareness of coeliac disease, particularly in the food and hospitality sectors; if coeliac disease is classed as a medical condition in the same circumstances; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Stanton,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Gastroenterology and Hepatology (NCPG&H) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Coeliac Disease is an autoimmune disease (or condition) which causes some adults and children to react adversely to gluten in food. Gluten is the protein in wheat, barley and rye. These grains are common ingredients in foods such as bread, cakes, pasta, beer, pizza and other manufactured foods. If a person with coeliac disease eats gluten, their intestine becomes damaged. This reduces their ability to absorb nutrients from food and can lead to various symptoms and complications, if undiagnosed.

The National Clinical Programme for Gastroenterology and Hepatology (NCPG&H) is cognisant of the importance of coeliac disease in Ireland, with an estimated 1:100 of the population here living with this condition. The NCPG&H has developed a pathway for diagnosing and monitoring patients with coeliac disease.

The Coeliac Society of Ireland play an important role in highlighting this disease. Healthcare professionals routinely refer those with coeliac disease, and those supporting people with coeliac disease, to their website for further information and guidance.

The food and hospitality sector management of coeliac disease is not within the remit of the HSE's NCPG&H. However, NCPG&H understands that the Coeliac Society of Ireland dedicate a section of their website to Food Businesses, offering information on catering training, food labelling and legislation amongst other topics. In addition, NCPG&H understands that the Coeliac Society of Ireland highlight and promote awareness of the condition in the food and hospitality sectors and have had some success in the development of specialty gluten free sections in supermarkets.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Horgan
General Manager

