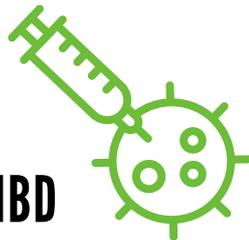


# GUT INSTINCT

## NEW YEAR, NEW NORMAL

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2021. We hope this year is an easier one for all and brings you good health.

In this issue, we discuss what the COVID-19 vaccine means for those with IBD, how the pandemic has affected screening for bowel cancer, why you need to know if it's Coeliac disease or gluten intolerance ... and we also have a delicious, gluten-free recipe for you - Dr Simon Glance's favourite!



## COVID-19 VACCINE & IBD

The roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine in Australia has commenced and is a necessary step in combatting this highly contagious virus.

Those with IBD (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis) are often taking medications that can weaken their immune system. Is it safe for those with IBD to have the COVID-19 vaccine?

The answer is 'yes'. The COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia are not considered live vaccines, they cannot cause COVID-19 or any other viral infection, and are considered safe for those who are immunosuppressed. If there are other health issues in addition to IBD, or if they are pregnant or taking corticosteroids, we do recommend having a chat to your doctor prior to having the vaccine.



## DON'T WAIT, GET CHECKED

Since 2000, bowel cancer rates have decreased more than any other cancer. Whilst this is positive news, there are concerns that the delays in cancer diagnosis and treatment due to the pandemic will have serious implications for bowel cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

According to the latest data, there were 78,000 fewer colonoscopies and sigmoidoscopies performed between Jan - Sept 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019. Colonoscopy is the gold standard for assessing bowel polyps and excluding bowel cancer.

There were also 215,000 fewer National Bowel Cancer Screening Program test kits returned in that same time period compared to 2019.

Early diagnosis of bowel cancer is key for a positive outcome. Don't leave your test kit on the kitchen bench, there's no better time to do it than now. We encourage you to be proactive and get checked by your doctor if you have concerns.

Stats from [bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://bowelcanceraustralia.org)

# COELIAC AWARENESS WEEK



13-20 March is **Coeliac Awareness Week**. Coeliac disease is an autoimmune illness that affects about 1 in 70 Australians, but approx. 80% of people don't know they have it. This year, the aim is to raise awareness of this and to encourage people to get tested if they are at risk.

An online assessment is available here - <https://www.coeliac.org.au/s/coeliac-disease/self-assessment>

## Is it important to know whether you have Coeliac disease?

The answer is 'yes'.

Untreated coeliac disease can cause chronic ill health and lead to liver disease, osteoporosis, other autoimmune illnesses and cancer. A diagnosis of coeliac disease is the first important step to managing symptoms and a strict gluten free diet can resolve the long term risks.

## COELIAC DISEASE OR GLUTEN INTOLERANCE?

It can be hard to know, as both coeliac disease and gluten (wheat) intolerance present with similar symptoms like, abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhoea, constipation, fatigue, headaches, nausea, vomiting, skin conditions and joint pain. There is increasing evidence of symptoms such as anxiety and feelings of depression too. The severity of symptoms will vary from person to person for both conditions. A lot of patients with coeliac disease do not have symptoms.

If you have symptoms or find that you are at risk according to the assessment link above, please see your doctor. They will do a simple blood test, if positive, they may refer you for a small bowel biopsy for a definitive diagnosis of Coeliac disease, or they may recommend gene testing.

## PERSIAN LOVE CAKE - GLUTEN FREE

At GastroNorth, we like to share the love. Dr Simon Glance's creation tastes as good as it looks. He shares his recipe below.

### Ingredients

3 cups almond meal  
½ cup raw sugar  
½ cup brown sugar  
120 grams softened butter  
2 eggs  
1 tsp ground cardamom  
250 grams yoghurt  
1 tsp salt  
2 tsp rosewater  
1 tbsp grated nutmeg  
¼ tsp saffron powder  
3 tbsp silvered almonds  
3 tbsp silvered pistachio  
rose petals for decoration

Syrup - 4 tbsp caster sugar, juice of 1 lemon, 1 tbsp rosewater

### Instructions

Preheat oven 180C

Mix the almond meal, sugars, butter and salt to create a coarse crumb.

Place half of the mixture into a spring form cake tin, that has been lined with baking paper & lightly oiled on the sides.

To the remaining mixture, mix in the eggs, yoghurt, rosewater, nutmeg, saffron, and cardamom. Add this mixture to the tin on top of the first layer.

Arrange the almonds around the edge and then add the pistachios.

Bake for 35-45 minutes and allow to cool. Then mix the syrup ingredients on low heat & pour over cooled cake. Add petals.

