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Set on staying healthy

EMILY FORD

Living with coeliac disease has its good and bad times for a mother.

It all began two years ago for Tania Davey.

The Torbay resident was struggling with iron deficiency and was on holiday in the South Island when she became unwell.

She visited a doctor who recommended she get tested for coeliac disease.

"I didn't have very many other symptoms of it but I did the test anyway. I was off the scales," Davey says.

Her gut and intestine were essentially "wrecked" as her body wasn't able to absorb the nutrients it needed.

Removing all traces of gluten was the first crucial step for Davey, who now favours a fresh and natural diet.

"I don't think people realise it's not a fashion statement.

"I'm not into fussy eaters and it

winds me up I now have to be insanely careful of what I eat."

While it took a while for her to adjust to a gluten free diet, she is determined to stay healthy and be around for her husband and three kids.

"I've got a little bit of life left in me as long as I'm careful."

It's a "mystery" as to how long she has had the disease, she says.

"It could have been a rapid onslaught or it may have been something I was suffering from for a long time without realising.

"I thought I was just a busy mum of three kids and that's why I was constantly tired."

Coeliac disease is a lifelong autoimmune disorder which damages the gut lining and the ability to absorb nutrients, leading to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

An estimated 65,000 New Zealanders have coeliac disease and 80 per cent of people don't know they have it, says Coeliac New Zealand.

Davey doesn't want to take

risks with the disease.

She calls restaurants in advance, researches everything at the supermarket, and politely declines meals if she's unsure.

"People think because I'm not spending lots of time in hospital that it's not life threatening, but it is actually," she says.

"I wouldn't wish this on anybody. There are definitely some times I can't shake it off."

"I've got a little bit of life left in me as long as I'm careful"

Tania Davey



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Tania Davey doesn't take risks when it comes to coeliac disease and sticks to a strict gluten free diet to manage it.

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