

What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease (also referred to as celiac sprue, non-tropical sprue, and gluten-sensitive enteropathy) is an autoimmune disorder triggered by consuming a protein called gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye. When a person with celiac eats gluten, the protein interferes with the absorption of nutrients from food by damaging a part of the small intestine called villi. Damaged villi make it nearly impossible for the body to absorb nutrients into the bloodstream, leading to malnourishment and a host of other problems including some cancers, thyroid disease, osteoporosis, infertility and the onset of other autoimmune diseases.



WHO GETS CELIAC DISEASE?

One out of every 133 Americans has celiac disease, equivalent to nearly 1% of the U.S. population. Unfortunately, 83% of the 3 million Americans living with celiac disease remain undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Celiac disease is a genetic disorder, meaning that it passes from parent to child via DNA. In some cases, stressful events such as pregnancy, surgery, infection, or severe emotional distress can trigger the onset of the disease.



COMMON SYMPTOMS

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Abdominal Pain | Dermatitis Herpetiformis | Infertility | Numbness in Legs |
| Anemia | Diarrhea | Joint Pain | Osteopenia |
| Bloating | Dental Enamel Defects | Pale Sores in Mouth | Osteoporosis |
| Delayed Growth | Fatigue | Migraines | Weight Loss |
| Depression | Gas | Nausea | |

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

With a wide variety of symptoms associated with celiac disease, gaining an accurate diagnosis can be difficult. To determine if a patient has celiac disease, a physician can screen by using a simple antibody blood test, sometimes combined with a genetic test. If a celiac diagnosis is still suspected, the doctor will likely perform a small intestinal biopsy for confirmation.

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TREATMENT OF CELIAC DISEASE: A GLUTEN-FREE DIET

The only current treatment for celiac disease is simple: a lifelong gluten-free diet. There are no medications or surgeries that can cure the autoimmune disease. Eating any amount of gluten, no matter how tiny it is, can cause damage to the villi of the small intestine and prevent patients from absorbing nutrients into the bloodstream.



Eliminating popular foods from the diet can seem overwhelming when a patient is first diagnosed, but with some extra effort in the kitchen, people with celiac disease can eat delicious food that tastes just as good as their gluten-containing counterparts.

CELIAC DISEASE FACTS

- Celiac disease affects 1 in 133 people.
- 3 million Americans across all races, ages, genders and genders suffer from celiac disease.
- Celiac disease is hereditary, so all first and second-degree relatives should be tested.
- 83% of people with celiac disease are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.
- 6-10 years is the average time a person waits to be correctly diagnosed in the US.
- We waste billions of critical healthcare dollars each year on unnecessary testing and treatment for those seeking a diagnosis.
- Celiac disease can lead to a number of other conditions including infertility, neurological disorders and some cancers. Celiac disease can also trigger the onset of other autoimmune diseases.
- A strict, 100% gluten-free diet is currently the only way to control celiac disease. There is currently no pharmaceutical treatment.

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