

What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease is an autoimmune digestive disease that damages the villi of the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food.

How does gluten affect people with celiac disease?

Gluten is a protein found in the grains wheat, rye, barley and all of their many bi-products.* The gluten triggers an abnormal immune response in those with celiac disease. This causes the tiny hair-like projections in the small intestine (villi) to flatten. The result is an inflamed intestinal lining causing the inability to absorb nutrients and possible symptoms in nearly all parts of the body.

*Oats are naturally gluten-free but cross-contamination can occur if the field is shared with wheat. Ensure you are using oats that are *pure, uncontaminated, certified gluten-free*. Experts recommend that up to 50g of dry gluten-free oats are considered safe. Check nutrition labels for portion size.

Can this be cured?

There is no cure. The only true solution is to avoid foods with gluten and stick to a gluten-free diet. There are, however, products in the early stages of development to alleviate the discomfort associated with a sudden gluten attack and damage caused by accidental ingestion of gluten.

How can a gluten-free diet help?

By avoiding food with gluten, a person with celiac disease can have a healthy life and avoid the symptoms associated with the disease. Once gluten is removed from the diet, the intestine has a chance to heal and can then absorb nutrients normally.

The gluten-free diet may be missing essential vitamins and minerals; supplements often are necessary. FYI: Gluten-free products often have more sugar & fat than their “regular” counterparts.

Don't feel like you need to know everything right away. There is a lot to take in and many changes to be made. It is normal to feel overwhelmed because of the amount of information available.

Who can help my child and me?

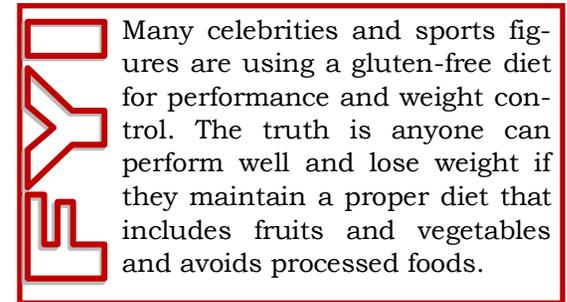
Parents of children with celiac disease are encouraged to seek help and advice from doctors, school nurses, registered dietitians and local support groups which can offer guidance as needed. They can help you with topics such as the gluten-free diet, teacher-school communication, coping with peer parties, dining out, making healthy choices and recommending age appropriate books.

Do support groups offer medical advice or expertise?

No, but they can help you locate a pediatric gastric specialist and help you with referrals. They can help you sift through the overwhelming maze of information and guide you through the life style changes required including setting up your kitchen to avoid cross-contamination.

How will this affect my family?

Eating gluten-free can be difficult. Meal planning can be challenging. Peers and family members may not understand or cooperate with the gluten-free restrictions of the diet. In the beginning, there is a steep learning curve and it helps if the entire family is on board.



What if celiac disease goes untreated?

Because the intestinal villi are unable to absorb the nutrients, the body does not receive the nourishment that it needs, resulting in malnutrition. Symptoms may occur at any age but most commonly develop during 20s, 30s & 40s. If celiac is not treated via gluten avoidance, damage caused by the gluten can be chronic, may lead to associated disorders and can be life-threatening. Unfortunately, due to late diagnosis, the following prolonged disorders become symptoms. In children who are untreated, malabsorption of nutrients can adversely affect growth and development.

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| ⇒Autoimmune disorders | ⇒Liver Disease | ⇒Peripheral Neuropathy |
| ⇒Dermatitis Herpetiformis | ⇒Stunted growth ¹ | ⇒Fibromyalgia |
| ⇒Type 1 Diabetes | ⇒Anemia | ⇒Chronic Fatigue Syndrome |
| ⇒Thyroid Disease | ⇒Rickets, Osteoporosis | ⇒Chronic Active Hepatitis |
| ⇒Systemic Lupus | ⇒Increased risk of Cancer | ⇒IBS |

¹Children with celiac generally begin having symptoms after 6 months of age, shortly after the addition of cereal into their diet. They may not grow and gain weight normally because their bodies are not absorbing needed nutrients (failure to thrive). Children may not reach their full height if they have prolonged nutrient malabsorption. They can become very ill and require hospitalization to restore nutrients and fluids.

What is the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America and what can it offer us?

The Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG) is a national, non-profit organization headquartered in Auburn, Washington. It offers information about the physical aspects of celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity, grocery shopping and understanding food labels. GIG also runs a food certification program, Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO). Its logo on the food package assures the product is gluten-free.



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Parent Resources

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Celiac Disease Center – East Campus
Dana 601
330 Brookline Ave
Boston, MA 02215
617-667-1272 www.CeliacNow.org



The Univ. of Chicago Celiac Disease Center
5841 S. Maryland Avenue, Mail Code 4069
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: 773-702-7593
www.cureceliacdisease.org



Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University
Harkness Pavilion
180 Fort Washington Avenue Suite 936
New York, NY 10032
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www.celiacdiseasecenter.columbia.edu



GLUTEN INTOLERANCE GROUP
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**My child may have celiac disease.
What do I do now?**

FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions
about Celiac Disease and
Non-celiac Gluten Sensitivity