



# CELIAC DISEASE

## WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac disease is an “autoimmune” disease. When a person has celiac disease, the body’s defense system (immune system) reacts to a protein called “gluten”, found in wheat, rye, barley, and sometimes oats. This reaction damages your intestines, making it hard for your body to absorb the nutrients it needs from food. People with celiac disease feel sick if they eat anything with gluten in it, like bread, pasta, or cereal. It can affect children and adults

## SYMPTOMS

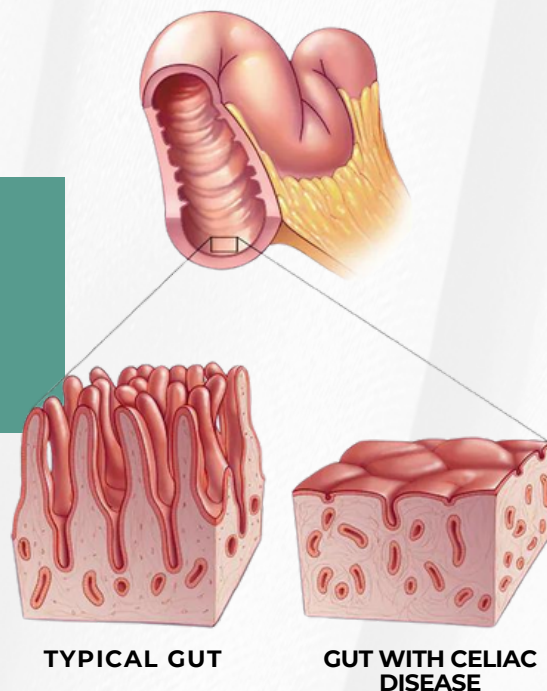
Celiac disease can cause different symptoms in different people. Some people have no symptoms, and only learn that they have the disease when they get tests for other reasons. When symptoms do happen they commonly include:

- **Belly pain**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Weight loss**
- **Bloating**
- **Bad gas**
- **Low appetite**
- **Itchy skin rashes**
- **Weak bones or low Iron levels**
- **Oily bowel movements that float**

## WHICH FOODS CAN I EAT?

1. Rice, corn, potatoes, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, and soybeans
2. Special flours, pasta, and other products labeled "gluten free"
3. Fruits and vegetables
4. Meat, fish, and eggs
5. Milk cheese and other dairy foods\*
6. Wine and most distilled alcoholic drinks

\*Unless your doctor suggests avoiding these foods for a short period of time while your Intestines heal



TYPICAL GUT

GUT WITH CELIAC DISEASE

## TREATMENT

### GLUTEN-FREE DIET

- A gluten-free diet is a diet that doesn't contain any gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley, and (sometimes) oats.
- Many foods, such as breads, pasta, pizza, cereals, and crackers, have gluten in them.
- People who are on a gluten-free diet should not eat any foods with gluten.

## CAN I EAT OUT?

Yes. Many restaurants now have gluten-free menus or foods. If you eat out, always let the restaurant know that you can't have anything that contains gluten or has been in contact with gluten. That way, they can be extra careful when they prepare your food.

## WHAT FOODS SHOULD I AVOID?

You need to avoid all foods made from or with wheat, rye, barley and sometimes oats.

You should also avoid other types of foods that contain or might contain gluten, unless they are specifically labeled "gluten free." These include:

- Flour, breads, pizza, crackers, muffins, and baking mixes
- Pasta, pastries, and cereals
- Processed meats and vegetarian meat substitutes
- Some sauces, spreads, spices, condiments, salad dressing
- Beers, ales, lagers, and malt vinegars

To know exactly which foods you can eat, you have to read ingredient labels on food packaging. For people with celiac disease, even tiny amounts of gluten can be harmful. So it's important to read labels carefully, even on things like oil sprays used for baking or pan cooking.

People with celiac disease can still take most types of medicines. But some prescription and over-the-counter medicines and supplements might contain a small amount of gluten. Check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you are not sure if something is safe to take.

## WHAT WILL MY LIFE BE LIKE?

Most people feel a lot better within 2 weeks of starting a gluten-free diet, but complete healing can take 6-9 months and then you will have a repeat EGD to determine severity and healing. If you have celiac disease, you need to avoid gluten for the rest of your life.

The hardest part about the disease is getting used to eating in a whole new way. The good news is that there are plenty of gluten-free foods as well as resources for people with celiac disease.

## Hidden Sources of Gluten



## READING FOOD LABELS

- Avoid all products with wheat, rye, barley, malt or triticale in the ingredients label.
- Even if package labeled "gluten-free" always double check.
- Buy naturally gluten-free grains and flours (rice flour, sorghum flour).
- Avoid products labeled "may contain" or "made with shared equipment" with wheat/gluten.
- Be aware of shared cooking equipment in your own home.
- When in doubt, go without. It is safer for you to find an alternative.

