



## WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

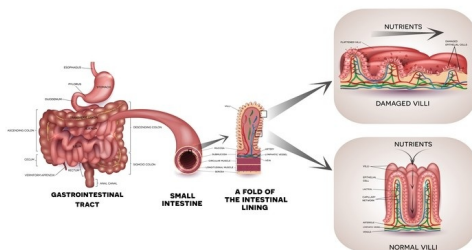
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**Celiac Disease** is a lifelong autoimmune intestinal disorder, found in individuals who are genetically susceptible. The cause of Celiac Disease, also known as *celiac sprue*, or *gluten sensitive enteropathy*, is unknown. One out of 133 people in the United States is affected with celiac disease, and it occurs in 5-15% of the offspring and siblings of a person with celiac disease.

Celiac Disease is unique in that a specific food component, **gluten**, has been identified as the trigger. Damage to the mucosal surface of the small intestine is caused by an immunologically toxic reaction to the ingestion of **gluten** and interferes with the absorption of nutrients. **Gluten** is the common name for the proteins in specific cereal grains. These proteins are found in all forms of **wheat** (including durum, semolina, spelt, kamut, einkorn, and faro), and related grains: **rye**, **barley** (and its derivatives—malt, malt flavoring, malt vinegar) and **triticale** (which is a hybrid of rye and wheat) and must be eliminated from one's diet.



### CELIAC DISEASE DAMAGED SMALL INTESTINE LINING INTESTINAL VILLI DO NOT ABSORB NUTRIENTS BECAUSE OF REDUCED SURFACE AREA



### What Happens With Celiac Disease

When individuals with Celiac Disease ingest **gluten**, the villi—tiny hair-like projections in the small intestine that absorb nutrients from food—are damaged. Damaged villi, therefore, do not effectively absorb basic nutrients—proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and, in some cases, water and bile salts. If Celiac Disease is left untreated, damage to the small bowel can be chronic and life threatening, causing an increased risk of associated disorders, both nutritional and immune related.

### Some long-term conditions that can result from untreated Celiac Disease:

- Osteoporosis
- Lactose intolerance
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Pancreatic insufficiency
- Neurological manifestations
- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Intestinal lymphomas and other gastrointestinal cancers

- Vitamin K deficiency associated with risk for hemorrhaging
- Central and peripheral nervous system disorders—usually due to unsuspected nutrient deficiencies

### Treatment of Celiac Disease

**The only treatment for Celiac Disease is the lifelong adherence to a gluten-free diet.** When gluten is removed from the diet, the small intestine will start to heal and overall health improves. Medication is not normally required. Dietary compliance increases the quality of life and decreases the likelihood of osteoporosis, intestinal lymphoma and other associated illnesses.

Note: Because osteoporosis is common and may be profound in patients with newly diagnosed Celiac Disease, it is recommended that bone density be measured at or shortly after diagnosis and that a celiac patient consult their physician regarding specific nutritional supplementation to correct any deficiencies.

Adapting to the gluten-free diet requires some lifestyle changes. It is essential to read labels and to learn how to identify ingredients that may contain hidden gluten. Hidden gluten can be found in some unlikely foods, from cold cuts to hard candies, from licorice to soups, etc. Suffice it to say, that anything with the word **wheat** in it needs to be avoided. This includes hydrolyzed wheat protein, wheat starch, wheat germ, and so on. Wheat has several names and varieties: Beware *flour, bulgur, semolina, spelt, frumento, drum* (also spelled *duram*), *kamut, graham, einkorn, farina, couscous, seitan, matzoh and cake flour*.

**Note:** Most people agree that oats are gluten-free, but when processed commercially, they can become contaminated during the manufacturing process. Some people argue that the risk of contamination is extremely low, but one needs to assess whether they're willing to take that risk.

Here are just a few of the more common grains and starches that are safe to eat:

Amaranth	Potato
Arrowroot	Quinoa
Beans and Legumes (including peas, lentils)	Rice
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)	Soy
Corn	Tapioca
Millet	Taro root

Other foods that are usually gluten-free and safe to eat: Dairy products, Eggs, Fish, Fruit

For complete, and continuously updated, lists of all the safe and forbidden foods, beverages, ingredients and additives, visit [www.celiac.com](http://www.celiac.com). Once at the home page, see and select on the left side "[Safe Gluten-Free Food List / Unsafe Foods & Ingredients.](#)"

Additionally, here's the link to the "[Quick Start Gluten-Free Diet Guide for Celiac Disease & Non-Celiac Gluten Sensitivity,](#)" a great resource to print out and retain for your files.

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