

What is Celiac Disease?



How it works: Gluten can make people with **celiac disease (CD)** very sick. It damages the *small intestine*, the part of our *digestive tract* in our tummies that helps soak up the **nutrients** and **vitamins** we need to grow strong and stay healthy.

- **Gluten** - a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. It's so small you can't even see it!



The "Clinical Chameleon"

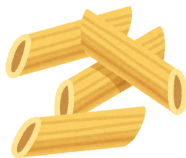


Celiac disease is sometimes called a "**clinical chameleon**"! It looks different for everyone, just like a chameleon changes colours to blend in!

Did you know:

Celiac disease affects around 1% of the population — but up to 80% of cases remain undiagnosed.

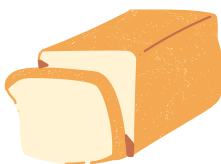
Some foods (usually) contain gluten...



Pasta



Baked goods



Bread



Crackers

Unless they say 'gluten-free' or have this sticker!



Always check the label first!

Information for Parents/Guardians:

Symptoms

May occur individually or in combination in children or adults:

- Upset stomach, cramping, bloating, or gas
- Nausea
- Constipation or recurring diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Lactose intolerance
- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies
- Weakness or fatigue
- Headache or migraines
- Anxiety, depression, and brain fog
- Mouth ulcers/canker sores
- Bone or joint pain

Additional symptoms in children:

- Delayed growth
- Delayed puberty
- Irritability and behavioural changes
- Dental enamel abnormalities
- Vomiting
- Frequent mouth ulcers



Treatment

The only current treatment for CD is a strict gluten-free diet for life. This will enable recovery of the gut and may reduce the risk of developing other associated diseases and complications. Patients should be referred to a registered dietitian with expertise in CD for a nutrition assessment, education and follow-up. Regular follow-up with your physician is also recommended.

Genetics

CD is an inherited condition and symptoms may develop at any age. First-degree relatives (parents, children and siblings) of individuals with CD are at the highest risk of having unrecognized CD (~5-15%). It is recommended that all first-degree relatives of individuals with CD get screened regularly.



Diagnosis

CD diagnosis requires testing.

Blood tests can be performed to screen for CD in people with mild or atypical symptoms and those in high-risk groups, but an intestinal biopsy is needed to confirm a diagnosis.

CD is only diagnosed with a small intestinal biopsy.

A gluten-free diet should not be started until blood tests & biopsies are done, since it can interfere with making an accurate diagnosis.