



## Celiac Disease

In health and nutrition, gluten has become a familiar term. But gluten is more than just a dietary consideration for some people—it's a matter of health and well-being. This is particularly true for those with celiac disease.

### What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder in genetically predisposed people in which ingesting gluten damages the small intestine. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. When people with celiac disease eat gluten, their bodies mount an immune response that attacks the small intestine.

### The Role of Gluten and the Rise of Gluten-Free Products

Gluten is a protein in many grains, including wheat, barley, and rye. It gives bread its chewy texture and is often used as a filler in processed foods. For most people, gluten is harmless, but it can cause serious health problems for those with celiac disease. In response to the needs of those with celiac disease and other gluten sensitivities, the availability of gluten-free products has significantly increased over the years. These products are now widely available in most supermarkets, from gluten-free bread and pasta to gluten-free sauces and snacks. However, it's important to note that these gluten-free alternatives are often more expensive than their gluten-containing counterparts.

### Symptoms and Diagnosis

Symptoms of celiac disease can vary widely, and a person may have multiple symptoms that come and go. Common symptoms include digestive problems such as bloating, diarrhea, and abdominal pain, but they can also include fatigue, weight loss, and anemia. Some people with celiac disease may have no symptoms at all. If you're experiencing celiac disease symptoms, seeking medical attention is essential.

Your healthcare provider may use a variety of tests to diagnose this condition, including blood tests to look for specific antibodies and an endoscopy to examine your small intestine and take a biopsy for analysis.

### Treatment

The primary treatment for celiac disease is a strict gluten-free diet. This means avoiding all foods that contain wheat, barley, and rye. While this may seem challenging, the increasing availability of gluten-free products makes this dietary change more manageable. Remember,

it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider if you're experiencing any symptoms of celiac disease. They can diagnose you adequately and guide you through the appropriate treatment options.

## **Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition**

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The Center for Digestive Health & Nutrition is a private medical practice comprised of experienced Gastroenterologists, Nurse Practitioners, and staff members dedicated to preventing and treating digestive disorders. Our physicians have been serving the needs of those in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas since 1977, having cared for tens of thousands of individuals with digestive problems. Our mission is to deliver high-quality gastroenterology services efficiently and cost-consciously. We realize the very sensitive nature of GI illness and understand the necessity to provide our services in an environment that stresses patient privacy and confidentiality and where patient satisfaction is the goal. Appointments can be conveniently scheduled online via our website above. Learn more about digestive issues on Instagram @thedigestivetract

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