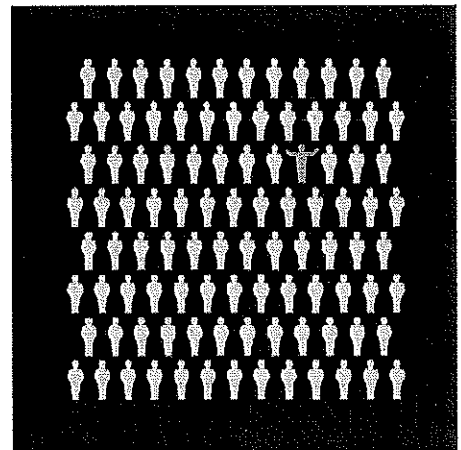


CELIAC DISEASE

What Is Celiac Disease?

- ▶ People with celiac disease cannot eat gluten.
- ▶ Gluten is a protein found mainly in wheat, barley and rye, but may also be in products you use each day, such as soy sauce and salad dressing, as well as some medicines, vitamins and even some lipsticks.
- ▶ **When a person with celiac disease eats gluten, the immune system, which is supposed to help protect the body against disease, reacts by harming the cells of the lining of the small intestine and may also harm other parts of the body such as the skin, bones or brain (nervous system).**
- ▶ Patients with celiac disease who do not take gluten out of their diet will keep harming the small intestine. This can cause malabsorption, lower vitamins and minerals in their bodies, and more serious long-term problems, among other things.
- ▶ Celiac disease is a health condition of the small intestine that happens in **1 out of 100** people. Both dietary and genetic factors cause the disease.



The information provided by the AGA Institute is not medical advice and should not be considered a replacement for seeing a medical professional.

April 2016

© AGA 2016

CELIAC DISEASE

Symptoms

There are many different symptoms of celiac disease. Below are a few more common symptoms, though there are many more.

People with celiac disease may have one, some or none of these symptoms. Having the symptoms below does not mean you have celiac disease, just as some patients with the disease may not show any symptoms.

- Gas, belly bloating and pain that doesn't go away.
- Diarrhea (loose stool) or constipation (hard stool or trouble passing stool) that doesn't go away.
- Pale, foul-smelling or fatty stool.
- Weight loss or weight gain.
- Tiredness or low energy levels.
- Changes in behavior; irritability in children.
- Tingling or numbness in the legs (from nerve damage).
- Bone or joint pain.
- Muscle cramps.
- Delayed growth in children.
- Pale sores inside the mouth.
- Itchy skin rash.
- Brain fog.

If you think you may have celiac disease, do not get rid of gluten from your diet until your doctor has tested you. It is important to talk with your doctor about options and discover the cause of your symptoms.



The information provided by the AGA Institute is not medical advice and should not be considered a replacement for seeing a medical professional.

April 2016

© AGA 2016

CELIAC DISEASE

Treatment

- ▶ *The gluten-free diet (GFD) is the only treatment for celiac disease.*
- ▶ *In many patients with celiac disease, even a small amount of gluten is enough to cause harm, even though they may not feel symptoms.*
- ▶ *A lifelong GFD will help protect your small intestine, and may be able to undo damage that has already happened.*

Good news! You should start feeling better within weeks of changing your diet.

The gluten-free diet (GFD)

Taking on the gluten-free diet may feel like a lot at first. Don't be afraid to reach out for help and support from your gastroenterologist, dietitian or local support group. Educating yourself and knowing what foods you can have will be the key to staying gluten-free and feeling healthy.

Here are a few tips as you take on your gluten-free diet:

- **The main offenders**

- These items have gluten and are used in many common food items, even as thickeners or fillers for sauces, condiments and more. These should always be avoided:
 - Wheat.
 - Barley.
 - Rye.
 - Malt (unless a gluten-free grain, such as corn, is named as a source).
 - Brewer's yeast.
 - Oats (unless they are pure, uncontaminated, labeled gluten-free oats and your doctor has said you are able to eat them).



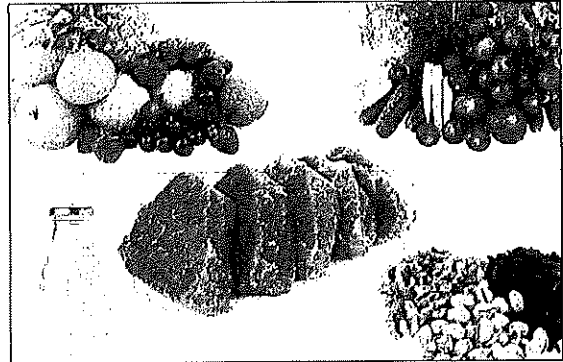
The information provided by the AGA Institute is not medical advice and should not be considered a replacement for seeing a medical professional.

April 2016

© AGA 2016

- **Eat balanced!**

- Fruits and veggies (fresh, frozen or canned without sauces or flavors); plain meat, fish, and poultry; plain nuts and seeds; oils; and most milk products are all naturally gluten-free.
- Stock up on these for snacks and meals to make sure you are getting all the nutrients you need.
- Just like a diet without any limits, eating a balance of each food group will help to keep you healthy.



- **No need to skip the starch**

- There are plenty of gluten-free grains and starches you can eat. Remember, whole grains are part of a balanced diet, too. These can be consumed on a GFD:
 - o Rice.
 - o Potatoes.
 - o Sweet potatoes.
 - o Corn.

- **Gluten-free replacements**

- If it is labeled "gluten-free," it is safe to eat.
- There are many gluten-free replacements for common snacks and foods like crackers, cereal, pasta, baking mixes and more.

What Successful Treatment Looks Like

Being healed from celiac disease means that your small intestine starts to work as it should again and **can start taking in nutrients the right way**; but, *it does not mean that you are able to eat gluten.*

While you will never be fully cured of celiac disease, meaning you will always have the disease, **after eating a GFD, your small intestine should heal** within two years for adults and within a few months in children and young adults.



The information provided by the AGA Institute is not medical advice and should not be considered a replacement for seeing a medical professional.

April 2016

© AGA 2016