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Celiac Disease

Celiac Disease is an inherited genetic digestive system disorder characterized by intolerance to gluten (a wheat protein). Two million people in the United States are currently affected by celiac disease (1 out of 133). When left untreated, individuals suffer from symptoms and incur serious health problems.

Gluten intolerance leads to malnourishment (regardless of food consumption) and internal damage. Once food has been broken down by the stomach it travels to the small intestines whose central role is to obtain nutrients; the presence of gluten (even minuscule amounts) damages the lining and prevents absorption.

Symptoms of celiac disease are individualized and may be present in the digestive system or other parts of the body. Although signs of the disease are not always evident, long-term complications still develop. In children, failure to thrive (normal growth) is a primary concern and liver disease and intestinal cancer may eventually surface in adulthood.

Infants and children commonly develop:

- abdominal bloating & pain
- chronic diarrhea & vomiting
- constipation & abnormal stools
- irritability & weight loss

Adults are more likely to experience:

- iron deficiency anemia & fatigue
- bone/joint pain & arthritis
- bone loss or osteoporosis
- depression or anxiety
- tingling/numbness in hands & feet
- seizures
- menstruation cycle abnormalities & infertility
- canker sores
- itchy rash (dermatitis herpetiformis)

Gluten intolerance is often under or misdiagnosed. Common detection methods use blood testing, tissue samples, and elimination diets. The only available treatment is a lifelong commitment to a strict gluten free diet. Foods containing wheat, rye, barley, and spelt must be avoided; most grains, cereals, pasta, and many processed foods must be removed completely from ones diet.

Those with gluten sensitivity cannot tolerate the smallest trace of wheat or derivatives (i.e. crumbs or the dusting of flour from a cutting board surface). Meal preparation and dining out requires knowledge on avoiding cross contamination. Always inform the server/host of special needs and only prepare food on a clean work surface after proper hand washing.

The prevalence of gluten free food items are becoming mainstream in supermarkets, restaurants, and food service establishments. Managing celiac disease and living a normal life is progressively getting easier as awareness grows.

American Dietetic Association
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Gluten-free Grains, Flours & Starches	Gluten-containing Grains, Flours, & Starches
Amaranth	Barley
Arrowroot	Bulgar
Bean flours	Cereal binding
Buckwheat	Chapatti flour (atta)
Corn	Couscous
Flava	Dinkel
Flax seed	Durum
Hominy	Einkorn
Mesquite flour	Emmer
Millet	Farina
Montina flour	Farro
Nut flour & meals	Fu
Oats (uncontaminated)	Gluten, gluten flour
Peas flour	Kamut
Potato flour/starch	Malt
Quinoa	Matzoh meal
Rice (all forms)	Oats
Sago	Orzo
Sorghum flour	Rye
Soy flour	Seitan
Tapioca (manioc, cassava, yucca)	Semolina
Teff or tef flour	Spelt
	Triticale
	Wheat (bran, germ, starch)

Information Resources:

- American Celiac Disease Alliance
  - www.americanceliac.org
- American Dietetic Association
  - www.eatright.org
- Children's Digestive Health and Nutrition Foundation
  - www.cdhnf.org
  - www.celiachealth.org
- Celiac Disease Foundation
  - www.celiac.org

Food Label Terminology Indicating gluten inclusion
Stabilizer Malt or Malt Flavoring Modified Starch
Starch
Emulsifier
Food Starch
Vegetable Gum
Hydrolyzed Vegetable Protein
Flour or Cereal Products
Vegetable Protein
Malt or Malt Flavoring
Modified Starch

Household Items Containing Gluten
Shampoo
Lipstick
Lotion
Stamps
Play dough

Food and Nutrition Services can assist in providing nutrition information.
Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.

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