

# Do You Have Celiac Disease?

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Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. The gluten-free diet has become a popular diet, but it is important to realize that a gluten-free diet is the only medical treatment for celiac disease. Celiac disease is an autoimmune, inflammatory disease caused by intolerance to gluten. Celiac disease affects 1 in 133 people but 95% of people with celiac disease are not diagnosed<sup>1</sup>.

## Who should be tested for celiac disease?

Recent studies<sup>1</sup> indicate that 41% of people with celiac disease do not have noticeable symptoms; therefore, routine screening every 3 years regardless of symptoms, and immediately if symptoms occur, of individuals in high-risk groups is recommended.

High-risk groups are:

- **First-degree relatives of individuals with celiac disease.** First-degree relatives have a 1 in 22 chance of developing celiac disease in their lifetimes<sup>1</sup>. A pediatric gastroenterologist should evaluate children younger than 3 years of age.
- **Persons with conditions related to celiac disease.** Individuals with a celiac disease-related condition or an autoimmune disorder, with and without celiac symptoms, should be routinely screened for celiac disease. The incidence of celiac is 1 in 56 in individuals with related conditions<sup>1</sup>. Related disorders are:
  - Anemia, related to iron, vitamin B12 or folate deficiencies
  - Type 1 diabetes
  - Hashimoto's hypothyroid
  - Lactose intolerance
  - Irritable Bowel Syndrome
  - Graves disease
  - Sjogren's syndrome
  - Lupus
  - Inflammatory Bowel Disease
  - Failure to thrive or short stature
  - Chronic fatigue
  - Gastrointestinal complaints (reflux, diarrhea, constipation, bloating, abdominal pain, gas, etc)
  - Osteopenia, osteoporosis
  - Low blood calcium
  - Neurological problems (ataxia, peripheral neuropathy, epilepsy, depression, anxiety)
  - Dermatitis herpetiformis (an itchy skin rash)
  - Eczema
  - Mouth sores
  - Dental enamel defects or recurrent cavities
  - Delayed start of menses
  - Premature menopause
  - Liver disease including primary biliary cirrhosis, autoimmune hepatitis, or elevated transaminases
- **Persons with Down syndrome.**
- **Persons with infertility.** Males and females with infertility or females with recurrent miscarriage where no other medical cause could be found may have unidentified celiac disease.

<sup>1</sup> Fasano A, Berti I, Gerarduzzi T, Not T, Colletti R, Drago S, et al. Arch Intern Med 2003;163:286-292

## Signs and symptoms of celiac disease

Check the symptoms that you experience or have experienced. Take this form to your doctor to discuss your risk for celiac disease. Remember that many people with celiac disease are asymptomatic, and so regardless of how many symptoms you have, you should be screened for celiac disease if you are at a high-risk for the disease. You should ask for these tests from your doctor: Total IgA, tTg IgA, and DGP-IgA. If you have any concerns, please contact me.

### Gastrointestinal

- Abdominal bloating and/or distention
- Abdominal pain
- Gas
- Indigestion and/or reflux
- Diarrhea or >3 loose stools daily
- Constipation
- Vomiting and/or nausea
- Pale, foul-smelling stools that float, or that are “fatty”
- Lactose intolerance

### Constitutional

- Fatigue
- Changes in appetite
- Joint pain
- Bone pain
- Muscle cramps
- Failure to thrive

### Neurological

- Peripheral neuropathy
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Behavior changes
- Seizures
- Foggy thinking

### Skin

- Dermatitis herpetiformis (DH), an itchy rash
- Hives
- Psoriasis
- Eczema

### Reproductive health

- Unexplained infertility
- Recurrent miscarriage

### Signs of Nutrient Deficiencies

- Iron-deficiency anemia
- Breathlessness
- Easy bruising
- Hair loss
- Vitamin B 12 deficiency
- Folate deficiency
- Tingling numbness in the legs
- Pale sores inside the mouth
- Cracks in sides of mouth
- Sensitivity to bright light or sunshine
- Redness or swelling of the tongue
- Nose bleeds
- Tooth discoloration, loss of enamel or recurrent cavities
- Low blood calcium or low blood magnesium
- Muscle cramps
- Difficulty seeing at dusk or at night

### Endocrine

- Delayed menarche
- Irregular menses
- Premature menopause
- Osteopenia or osteoporosis
- Elevated liver enzymes, liver disease
- Hypoglycemia

### Related Conditions

- Lactose intolerance
- Type 1 diabetes
- Lupus
- Hypothyroid, autoimmune
- Hyperthyroid, autoimmune
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Infertility
- Down Syndrome
- Rheumatoid or juvenile arthritis
- Sjogren’s syndrome
- Multiple sclerosis