

About CELIAC DISEASE



Information for Patients, Parents, and Caregivers: Understanding the ACG Clinical Guidelines
Diagnosis and Management of Celiac Disease



What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease is one of the most common gastrointestinal disorders. Celiac disease causes damage in the lining of the small intestine when eating gluten (a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye) in persons with a genetic predisposition.

Symptoms can vary greatly, but celiac often causes:

- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- itchy/blistery skin rash
- loss of bone density (osteoporosis)
- fatigue
- anemia
- failure to thrive in children

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Be sure to see your doctor before trying a gluten-free diet to avoid incorrect test results.
- The initial test to look for celiac disease is a simple blood test.
- The best way to confirm a diagnosis of celiac disease is with a small tissue sample (“biopsy”) of the small intestine that requires a painless test called endoscopy (a long tube with a tiny camera put into your mouth and passed down to the small intestine under sedation).
- In children, a diagnosis without biopsy is possible under certain circumstances.
- A strict lifelong gluten-free diet is the only treatment. A dietitian can help you with the diet plan.
- Vaccination against *Pneumococcus* (a common bacteria causing pneumonia and other serious infections) is recommended after your diagnosis.
- Regular visits with the doctor and dietitian for follow-up are needed after starting the diet to make sure your symptoms go away. The doctor will eventually want to confirm the damage in the lining of the small intestine is healed.
- The outlook is excellent in patients who are treated for celiac disease.



Questions You Should ask Your Physician about Gastroparesis Care

- Is my diagnosis confirmed?
- What is the gluten-free diet?
- What are the goals of the treatment?
- What vaccines would you recommend to prevent serious infections?
- What is the recommended follow-up?
- What is the risk in my family?



Warning Signs or Alarm Symptoms

- Celiac disease is a very serious condition, if untreated, it can cause severe malnutrition and even death.
- Consult your doctor immediately if your symptoms are not better despite following a gluten-free diet. You may need additional tests.

LEARN MORE



ACG Patient Information: Scan QR Code
or visit gi.org/topics/celiac-disease



Find a gastroenterologist
near you: gi.org/FindaGI



Read the Celiac Disease Guideline
bit.ly/acg-guidelines-celiac-2023