

Celiac Disease (Nontropical Sprue)



KANAKIA
Health Care

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What is the small intestine?

The small intestine is a hollow tube starting from the end of the stomach (called the pyloric sphincter) to the beginning of the large intestine. It is the longest part of the food pipe and measures approximately 21 feet in length in the living body. The small intestine is divided into three parts; the duodenum, jejunum and ileum. Its function is to absorb nutrients present in food. Absorption of food occurs through tiny finger like projections called villi.

What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease is intolerance to gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats. The disease causes damage to the small intestine and usually starts in childhood.

What is the cause of celiac disease?

Celiac disease may be a hereditary disorder or may result from early viral infection. There is a local immunological response to gluten.

What are the pathological changes that occur in celiac disease?

The finger like projections of the small intestine called villi, flatten out and damaged villi can only incompletely absorb nutrients, resulting in the weight loss and nutritional deficiencies common in celiac disease. The disorder is often diagnosed on the basis of symptoms.

What are the symptoms of celiac disease?

Some common symptoms are listed below. People with celiac disease may have any one, some or none of them. Having any of these symptoms does not mean one has celiac disease.

- Failure to grow in childhood
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Abdominal bloating and discomfort
- Anemia
- Fatigue
- Passage of fatty, foul-smelling stools that may float to the top of the toilet water

How is celiac disease diagnosed?

- The disease can be diagnosed clinically
- A blood test for tissue transglutaminase antibodies (tTG-IgA)
- Endoscopy to take a biopsy of the small intestine

What is the treatment of celiac disease?

- Nutritional counseling
- Consumption of a gluten-free diet, which includes avoiding breads and foods that contain wheat or rye flours, as well as soups, gravies, ice cream, and other commercial products to which gluten is added. Food labels must be carefully examined for gluten or grain products.
- Supplementation of iron, Vitamin B12

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- In severe cases, steroids may be prescribed to help promote recovery of the intestine.

Foods in celiac disease

Since a gluten-free diet is the treatment for celiac disease, nutritional counseling and dietary restrictions are essential. The following is a list of foods that may/may not be consumed.

Gluten free foods

- Beans, seeds, nuts in their natural, unprocessed form
- Fresh eggs
- Fresh meats, fish and poultry (not breaded, batter-coated or marinated)
- Fruits and vegetables
- Most dairy products
- Amaranth, arrowroot, buckwheat, corn and cornmeal
- Flax
- Gluten-free flours (rice, soy, corn, potato, bean)
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Sorghum
- Soy
- Tapioca

Gluten rich foods that should be avoided

- Barley (malt, malt flavoring and malt vinegar are usually made from barley)
- Rye

- Wheat and wheat flour derivatives - rava, maida, bulgur

Always read the contents of packaged foods and avoid those foods that do not have "gluten free" written on it.

Avoid cross contamination i.e. preparation of food in common vessels, not thoroughly cleaned.