

What Is Gluten Sensitivity?



According to research, gluten can cause specific reactions in the immune system and intestines, even in individuals who don't have celiac disease. This is known as "gluten sensitivity."

What is gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. You can find it in breads, pastas, crackers, and other foods made from these grains. There are also unexpected and hidden sources of gluten, such as sauces, gravies, soy sauce, processed and imitation meats, and many more foods and beverages.

Gluten Sensitivity vs. Celiac Disease

Celiac disease (CD) is an autoimmune reaction triggered by gluten, which damages the villi (the small absorptive finger-like structures) on the lining of the small intestine causing malabsorption of nutrients. The resulting health problems include malnutrition, osteoporosis, gastrointestinal issues, chronic fatigue, and even mental conditions such as depression. It is estimated that 1 in 133 Americans have celiac disease. People can go for decades without exhibiting symptoms of CD to have the disease suddenly triggered and manifested.

Gluten sensitivity still isn't very clearly understood. It is defined as an intolerance of the immune system to gluten resulting in the formation of antibodies and other reactions. It's been estimated by experts that 1 in 20 to as many as 1 in 7 Americans are gluten-sensitive. When they eat gluten, they can suffer symptoms such as gastrointestinal problems, headaches, fatigue, depression, and many more reactions. Gluten-sensitive individuals may or may not exhibit the damaged villi present in celiac patients.

Testing & Diagnosis

A gluten sensitivity diagnosis used to require blood tests for specific antibodies formed by the immune system against gluten. However, these antibodies are mostly found in the intestine rather than in the blood, making stool tests more effective in diagnosing gluten sensitivity. It's recommended that you meet with a qualified health practitioner for testing should you suspect that you're sensitive to gluten.

Treatment

The only known treatment for gluten sensitivity is the gluten-free diet.

**Tina Turbin, Founder of <http://GlutenFreeHelp.info>
Your Dependable Celiac and Gluten-Free Resource Guide**

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