

Celiac Disease Foundation Presents

9 Fast Facts

About Celiac Disease



1. My blood test showed positive for celiac disease, am I diagnosed?



The blood test is only the first step of a celiac disease diagnosis. A biopsy of your small intestine is needed to determine if you do have celiac disease.

2. What is the difference between celiac disease, wheat allergy, and gluten sensitivity?

Celiac disease is a genetic autoimmune disorder where eating gluten damages the small intestine. Wheat allergy is an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, to foods containing wheat. Those who do not have celiac disease or wheat allergy, but have symptoms when eating gluten are considered to have gluten sensitivity.



3. How common is celiac disease?



Celiac disease affects 1 in 100 people worldwide with the number of people affected doubling every 15 years. If an immediate family member has celiac disease, then the risk is 1 in 10 that you will have it too.

4. Will I lose weight on the gluten-free diet?

Not necessarily. Many people with celiac disease actually gain weight when their intestinal tract begins to heal since they can absorb nutrients again. Additionally, many gluten-free processed foods are high in calories.



5. What is 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten, and how much gluten-free food can I eat without getting sick?



20 ppm of gluten is the amount of gluten the FDA allows in a product labeled "gluten-free." One eighth of one teaspoon of gluten can damage the small intestine of someone with celiac disease.

6. Is my child's school required to provide him/her a gluten-free lunch?

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public schools are required to provide students with celiac disease, and other food allergies, safe food options.



7. Do I have to use special gluten-free soaps, shampoos, and lotions if I have celiac disease? Can gluten be absorbed through the skin?



Gluten cannot be absorbed through your scalp or skin unless there is an open lesion; it must be ingested to affect those with celiac disease. Because lipstick and lip products can be easily ingested, keep them gluten-free.

8. Do I have to give up coffee and corn on a gluten-free diet?

Coffee and corn are both gluten-free so may be enjoyed on the gluten-free diet.



9. Can celiac disease kill me?



For the 1% of people with refractory celiac disease, yes, it can be fatal. For those without refractory celiac disease, if left untreated, celiac disease can lead to Type I diabetes, heart disease, and malignancies. This is why it's important to get diagnosed before starting the gluten-free diet.