

# Celiac Disease Symptom Flares are Common During the Postpartum Period

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## INTRODUCTION

- Celiac Disease (CeD) is frequently diagnosed during the third trimester or postpartum period because of development of gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms.
- Whether women with established CeD on a gluten-free diet (GFD) may also experience a recurrence of symptoms in the post-partum period has not been examined.
- Previously, we retrospectively identified 70 pregnant women with an established CeD diagnosis; 10% (n=7) met with their health care provider because of a postpartum CeD symptom flare.

## AIM

- Examine the occurrence of CeD symptom flare during postpartum in women with CeD in the USA

## METHOD

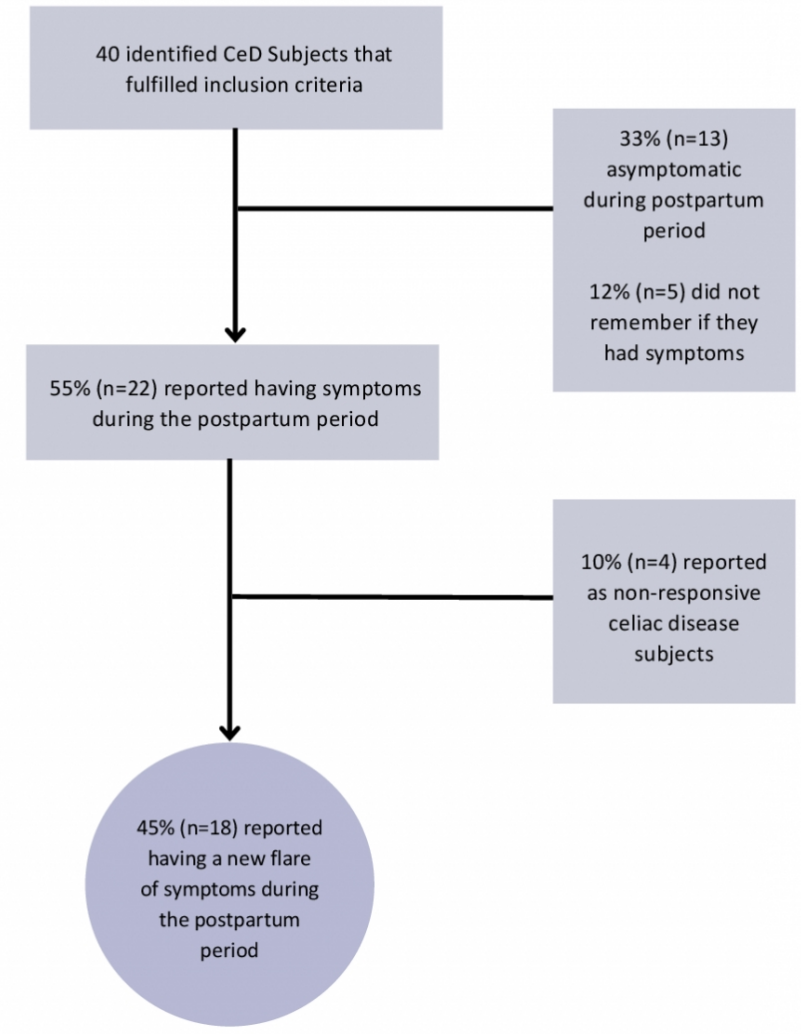
- An online survey with questions related to celiac disease symptoms before, during and after pregnancy was sent to women registered in iCureCeliac-a voluntary, patient-powered research network hosted by the Celiac Disease Foundation.
- Inclusion criteria: to already be diagnosed with CeD at the time of the pregnancy and to be following a gluten-free diet.
- Exclusion criteria: Non-responsive celiac disease (NRCD) pre-pregnancy
- A symptom flare was defined as the occurrence of symptoms that were attributed to CeD by the respondent

## RESULTS

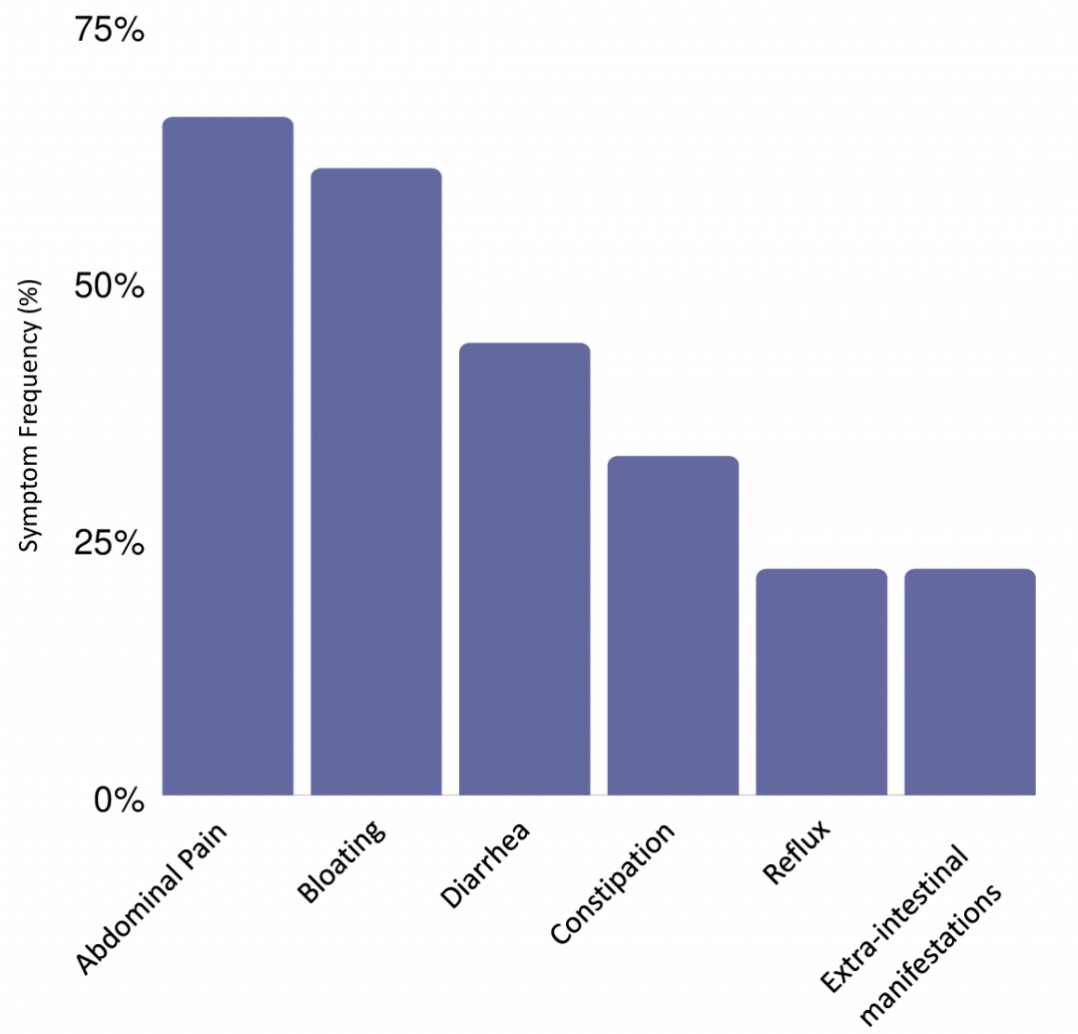
- 309 women participated in the national survey, 40 of whom met eligibility criteria.
- 18 (45%) reported a CeD symptom flare with onset during the postpartum period (Figure 1).
- Most common symptoms were abdominal pain (66%), bloating (61%), and diarrhea (44%). Extra-intestinal manifestations – such as: rash, fatigue, brain fog and myalgias, were reported by 22% (Figure 2).
- Symptoms typically lasted for more than one week (57%) (Figure 3).
- Among the women with symptom flares, 55% reported gluten exposure during postpartum compared to 16% of the asymptomatic women. (Figure 4).
- All women with symptom flares experienced them during their first pregnancy and had a recurrence during subsequent postpartum periods (n=18)

## RESULTS

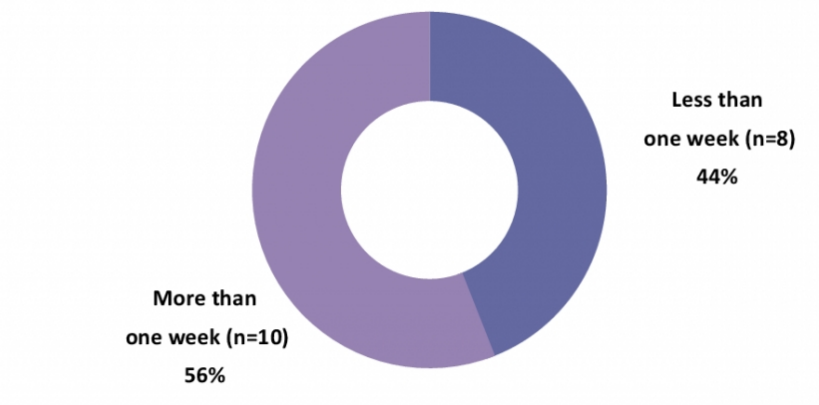
**Figure 1. Eligible Participants Included in the CeD-Preg Survey Study**



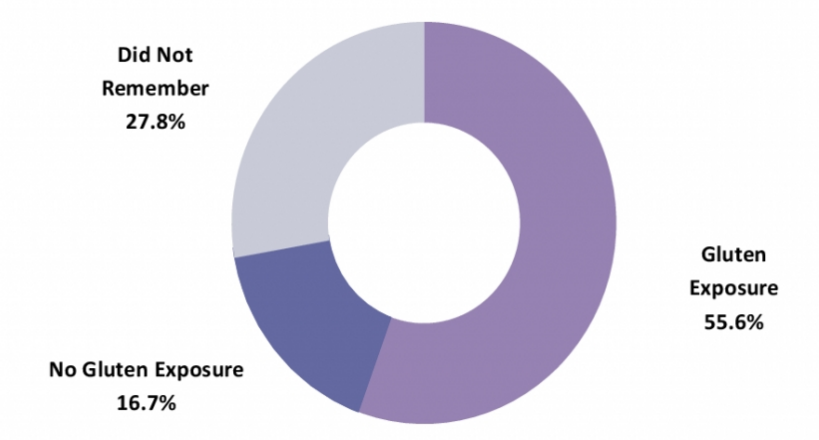
**Figure 2. Gastrointestinal Symptoms and Extraintestinal Manifestations reported by women with flares of Celiac Disease during the Postpartum Period.**



**Figure 3. Duration of Symptoms reported by Survey Participants**



**Figure 4. Gluten Exposure reported Among Survey Participants**



## CONCLUSIONS

- Postpartum symptom flares may be frequent in women with known celiac disease
- The most common symptom reported was abdominal pain.
- Many women report gluten exposures, but occurrence of symptoms in the postpartum period could also suggest hormonal effects on the GI tract and immune tolerance.
- Further evaluation in a larger prospective case-control study is on-going.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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