

CELIAC DISEASE AND NUTRITION

WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac disease is a digestive disorder that damages the small intestine. People with celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. The disease can cause long-term digestive problems by preventing the body from absorbing important nutrients including carbohydrates, fats, minerals, proteins and vitamins. Celiac disease is estimated to affect 1% of the population worldwide.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac disease can occur at any age, once solid foods are introduced in the diet. The most common symptoms of the disease are:

- vomiting
- weight loss
- constipation
- short stature
- failure to thrive
- chronic diarrhoea
- delayed growth and puberty
- abdominal bloating and pain
- pale, foul-smelling or fatty stool
- irritability and behavioural issues
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

HOW IS CELIAC DISEASE TREATED?

Presently, there is not definitive cure for Celiac Disease. This is a permanent condition and a strict gluten-free diet is the only possible way to manage the disease. Once gluten is removed from the diet, the symptoms resolve making it possible to lead a healthy life. In addition to wheat, barley, rye and triticale (a hybrid wheat and rye cereal), other foods that may contain gluten include:

- potato chips
- candy and candy bars
- processed meats and soups
- sauces and salad dressings

WHAT FOODS CAN BE CONSUMED?

The following foods are safe for patients with celiac disease, if free from gluten contamination:

- rice, corn (*maka*), millett (*bajra*)
- sorghum (*jawar*)
- lentils and pulses (*daal*)
- oats (only if pure and uncontaminated)
- nuts and seeds
- fruits and vegetables
- milk and dairy products
- types of fresh meats
- eggs
- salt, pepper, turmeric and other fresh spices
- water, tea, fruit juices and most other beverages

FOOD LABEL READING GUIDE

Label reading is very important in avoiding foods that contain gluten. The following points should be kept in mind when reading the ingredients label:

- Look for the term 'gluten free'
- Educate yourself about cross contact e.g wheat getting mixed with other gluten free flours in mills
- Be cautious of hidden sources of gluten

Opt for good quality branded flour packs especially which guarantee strict manufacturing standards that prevent cross contamination.



References:

- www.celiac.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CDF
- <http://www.celiac.com.pk/diet.php>
- <http://www.picserver.org/pictures/gluten-free01-lg.jpg>