



## CELIAC DISEASE



### What is celiac disease?

- It is a lifelong disease. It occurs when the body mistakenly attacks itself.
- The intestine is damaged when the person eats gluten.
- It has no cure, but it can be managed by avoiding gluten in food.
- It is not an allergy or an intolerance.
- People with gluten intolerance (also called "non-celiac gluten sensitivity") may experience stomach discomfort when they eat gluten, but their intestine is not damaged.
- It can affect both children and adults. Sometimes, there is more than one person with celiac disease in the same family.
- It is related to other autoimmune diseases such as type 1 diabetes and Hashimoto's hypothyroidism.



### What is gluten?

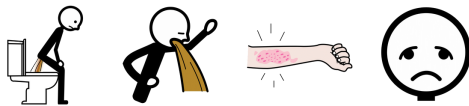


- It is a protein found in wheat, barley, rye, triticale, and spelt.
- Oats and lentils do not contain gluten, but they are often harvested alongside other cereals that do. That's why it is important to choose oats and lentils with a gluten-free certification.



### What are the symptoms of celiac disease?

- The digestive symptoms include diarrhea, loss of appetite, unintentional weight loss, vomiting, anemia, or growth delay in boys and girls.
- Other symptoms may also appear, such as skin problems, mouth sores, feeling sad or unmotivated, being very sensitive, or getting angry easily.
- Some people have celiac disease but do not show any symptoms.
- In adults, the diagnosis is more difficult.



### How do I know if I have celiac disease?

- To find out if you have celiac disease, a blood test and a gastroscopy are needed.
- You should not stop eating gluten without a doctor's advice, because the tests only work if the person is still eating gluten.
- Having a positive genetic test (HLA) does not mean you have the disease. It only indicates that you have a higher risk of developing it.



### How to use the QR code to access health information

1. Open your phone's camera.
2. Point it at the QR code (that square with patterns).
3. Tap the message that appears on the screen.
4. It will take you to a page with safe and verified health information.





### What is the treatment for celiac disease?

- Celiac disease has no cure. But people with celiac disease can live a healthy life.
- The only treatment is to stop eating foods with gluten forever.
- Not following a gluten-free diet can lead to problems such as nutrient deficiencies or an increased risk of cancer.



### How to recognize gluten-free foods?



- Unprocessed foods, such as fruit or milk, are safe. They do not need a label.
- Foods labeled “gluten-free” or those that carry the official symbol you see in the image below contain less than 20 mg of gluten per kg, and are safe.
- Avoid foods labeled “very low gluten content”; they are not safe.



### What is cross-contamination?

It is when a food that does not contain gluten comes into contact with another food that does contain gluten.

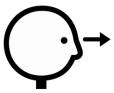
For example:

- Using the same knife to cut regular bread and gluten-free bread.
- Toasting gluten-free bread in the same toaster used for regular bread.
- Cooking gluten-free pasta in a pot that was previously used to cook pasta with gluten.



### How to avoid cross-contamination?

- Use clean utensils only for gluten-free foods.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before cooking.
- Clean kitchen surfaces before preparing gluten-free food.
- Store gluten-free foods in sealed and separate containers.
- Cook gluten-free foods in clean pots and pans.
- Do not use the same oil to fry both gluten-containing and gluten-free foods.
- Avoid wooden utensils because they can retain gluten and are difficult to clean thoroughly.



### What should you check?

- Pay special attention to the labels of medications, spices, cold cuts, sauces, and pre-cooked foods.



### Where can you find more information about celiac disease?

- FACE (Federación de Asociaciones de Celíacos en España): [celiacos.org](http://celiacos.org)
- ACEGA (Asociación Celíacos de Galicia): [celiacosgalicia.es](http://celiacosgalicia.es)



- Information verified by Dra. Laura Molina, specialist in Gastroenterology at the University Hospital Complex of Pontevedra.
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