
Celiac Disease, Gluten Intolerance and Wheat Allergy

I have been told that I have a gluten intolerance. Is this the same as Celiac Disease? Do I have a wheat allergy?

- **Celiac (See-lee-ak) Disease** is an autoimmune disease – a condition where the body attacks its own healthy cells and tissues, causing damage to the lining of the small intestine when gluten is ingested. This condition can affect your body's ability to absorb nutrients. It is diagnosed by a blood test or a biopsy. Digestive symptoms like cramping, diarrhea and constipation can occur. Other body symptoms such as bone or joint pain, headache or fatigue may also occur. Damage can be reversed by eliminating gluten containing foods, beverages, and products from your diet.
- **Gluten (gloo-ten) intolerance or non-celiac wheat sensitivity** is a condition with symptoms like Celiac Disease, but there is no damage to the intestines. Your body can absorb the nutrients that it needs. Symptoms may stop or improve when a gluten-free diet is followed.
- **Wheat allergy** is an immune reaction where the body makes antibodies that “attack” the proteins in wheat. To diagnose, an allergy test needs to be completed. Gluten from non-wheat sources may be tolerated. Depending on the severity of the allergy, you may develop hives, skin rash, nausea, indigestion, sneezing, asthma, or anaphylaxis which may be life-threatening.

Do I need to change what I eat? Yes! It is important to make diet changes.

- To treat Celiac Disease, remove all foods made from wheat, barley, and rye from your diet.
- If you have a wheat allergy, wheat containing foods should be removed from your diet to prevent an allergic reaction. Barley and rye may not cause a problem for you. Speak with your provider about this.
- Any food that is gluten-free will be wheat-free as well.