



CENTER OF SURGICAL EXCELLENCE

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CELIAC DISEASE

What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease is caused by a sensitivity to gluten. Gluten is a protein found in many grains. When people with Celiac disease eat foods containing gluten an allergic-like reaction by their immune system results in damage to the villi of the lining of the small intestine. Nutrients from food are normally absorbed into the bloodstream but the damage to the villi cause and ineffective absorption. Since the body's own immune system causes the damage, celiac disease is considered an autoimmune disorder.

Celiac Disease is inherited (passed down) in families. It sometimes affects more than one family member.

What are the Symptoms of Celiac Disease?

Symptoms vary with patients. Some complain of abdominal bloating, nausea, diarrhea and even constipation. Others complain of weight loss, gas, anemia, bone and muscle pain and fatigue. Some have even developed a condition called dermatitis herpetiformis which is an itch, blistering skin condition.

How is Celiac Disease diagnosed?

Doctors look for evidence of Celiac Disease by doing tests to check blood levels and stool tests to rule out other digestive problems. An Endoscopy with biopsy can be done. This sample is then examined under a microscope by a surgical pathologist to confirm the diagnosis and evaluate the treatment.

How is Celiac Disease treated?

There is no specific cure for Celiac Disease at the present time. Patients can become symptom-free by making a life-time commitment to eating a gluten-free diet. This will enable the lining of the intestines to return to normal.

Patients should always consult their Doctor and review their diet with him/her in order to avoid health problems.

