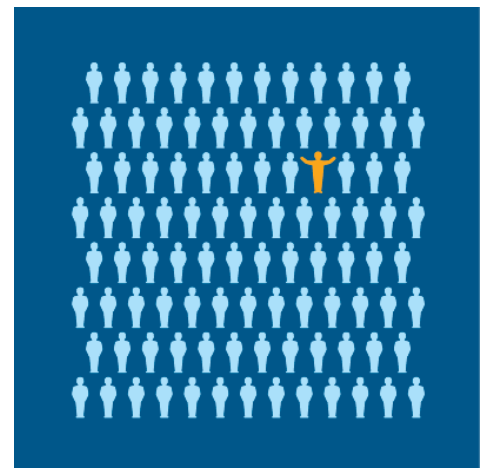


## CELIAC DISEASE

# What Is Celiac Disease?

- ▶ People with celiac disease cannot eat gluten.
- ▶ Gluten is a protein found mainly in wheat, barley and rye, but may also be in products you use often, such as soy sauce and salad dressing, as well as some medicines, vitamins and even candies.
- ▶ **When a person with celiac disease eats gluten, the immune system, which is supposed to help protect the body against disease, reacts by harming the cells of the lining of the small intestine and may also harm other parts of the body such as the skin, bones or brain (nervous system).**
- ▶ Patients with celiac disease who do not take gluten out of their diet will keep harming the small intestine. This can cause malabsorption, lower vitamins and minerals in their bodies, and more serious long-term problems, among other things.
- ▶ Celiac disease is a health condition of the small intestine that happens in **1 out of 100** people. Both dietary and genetic factors cause the disease.



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- ▶ Celiac disease is a lifelong health problem.
- ▶ While the disease can be tricky to diagnose, the symptoms of diarrhea (loose stool) and belly pain often ease within weeks of eating a gluten-free diet.
- ▶ If you think you may have celiac disease, do not stop eating gluten until you have been tested and the tests show that you have celiac disease. Getting rid of gluten before testing will change the results.
- ▶ Many autoimmune illnesses are connected to celiac disease.
  - Thyroid disease
  - Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
  - Type 1 diabetes
    - Type 1 diabetes patients have a 3-10% greater chance of having celiac disease than those without Type 1 diabetes.

