



DietaryHawk

COELIAC DISEASE

WHAT IS COELIAC DISEASE?

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition which affects the small intestine. In people with coeliac disease the immune system reacts abnormally to a protein called gluten. Gluten causes damage to the lining of the small intestine, preventing the absorption of nutrients. This can result in deficiencies of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Poor management of coeliac disease can result in a number of serious health consequences such as osteoporosis, infertility, depression and teeth problems.

WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is a protein found in:

Wheat
Rye
Barley
Oats

HOW COMMON IS COELIAC DISEASE?

In Australia, coeliac disease affects approximately 1 in 100 people. However, around 80% of these cases remain undiagnosed.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COELIAC DISEASE?

Symptoms of coeliac disease vary between individuals. Some individuals with coeliac disease may experience many symptoms while some individuals may be asymptomatic meaning they have no symptoms at all. Common symptoms include:

Diarrhoea or constipation	Nausea
Cramping or abdominal pain	Bloating
Fatigue, weakness or lethargy	Bone and joint pain
Unexplained weight loss	Mouth ulcers
Iron deficiency	Skin rashes
Irritability	Bruising easily

HOW IS COELIAC DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

Blood tests are used to screen for coeliac disease, however diagnosis cannot be made on the basis of a blood test alone. The only way to properly diagnose coeliac disease is via a small bowel biopsy conducted by a gastroenterologist.

HOW IS COELIAC DISEASE TREATED?

There is currently no cure for coeliac disease. The only treatment for coeliac disease is a strict life-long gluten free diet. This includes excluding even traces of gluten. A strict gluten free diet prevents further damage to the lining of the small intestine.