

# What is COELIAC DISEASE?

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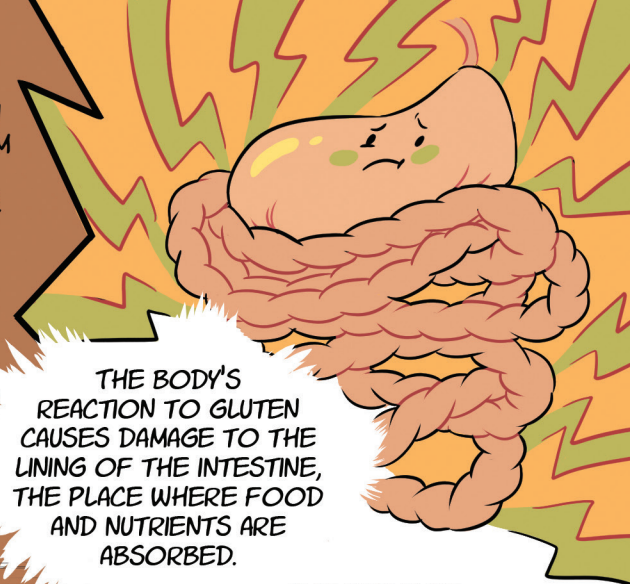


COELIAC DISEASE (PRONOUNCED SEE-LIAC) IS A LIFELONG AUTOIMMUNE CONDITION WHERE THE BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM REACTS TO GLUTEN, A PROTEIN FOUND IN WHEAT, BARLEY AND RYE. SOME PEOPLE ARE SENSITIVE TO OATS TOO.



THE BODY'S REACTION TO GLUTEN CAUSES DAMAGE TO THE LINING OF THE INTESTINE, THE PLACE WHERE FOOD AND NUTRIENTS ARE ABSORBED.

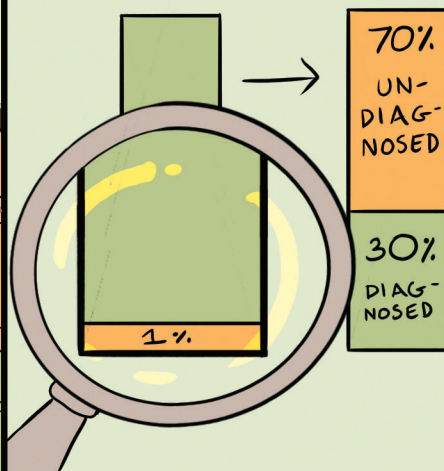
THIS DEPRIVES THE BODY OF THE NUTRIENTS IT NEEDS, AND CAN LEAD TO MALNUTRITION.



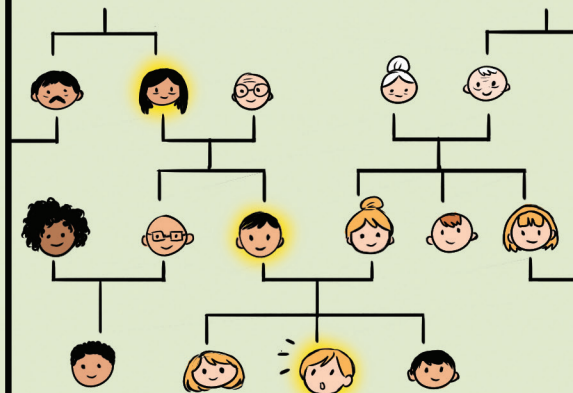
PEOPLE WITH UNDIAGNOSED COELIAC DISEASE CAN HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF SYMPTOMS. MANY OF THE SYMPTOMS ARE RELATED TO THE DAMAGE IN THE GUT, WHILE OTHERS ARE THE RESULT OF THE BODY BEING STARVED OF NUTRIENTS, WHICH CAN LEAD TO FATIGUE AND ANAEMIA.



AROUND 1% OF THE UK POPULATION HAS COELIAC DISEASE, BUT ONLY 30% OF THOSE WITH THE CONDITION HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED.



WHILE COELIAC DISEASE AFFECTS AROUND 1 IN 100 PEOPLE IN THE UK, IT IS A GENETIC CONDITION.



THIS MEANS THAT IF YOU HAVE AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER (PARENT, SIBLING OR CHILD) WHO HAS COELIAC DISEASE, THEN YOUR CHANCES OF HAVING THE CONDITION INCREASES TO 1 IN 10.

ON AVERAGE, 1 IN 4 PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH COELIAC DISEASE WERE PREVIOUSLY MISDIAGNOSED WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS) AS THE SYMPTOMS OFTEN LOOK SIMILAR SUCH AS STOMACH CRAMPS, BLOATING, DIARRHOEA, CONSTIPATION AND EXHAUSTION.

## COELIAC DISEASE? IBS?



IF YOU'VE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH IBS IN THE PAST, STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS, AND HAVEN'T BEEN CHECKED FOR COELIAC DISEASE BEFORE, YOU SHOULD ASK TO BE TESTED. MAKE SURE YOU ARE EATING ENOUGH GLUTEN IN YOUR DIET SO THE TEST WORKS.

OVER THE PAGE, YOU'LL MEET SOME PEOPLE WHO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE OF COELIAC DISEASE, LEARN SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR MANAGING THE CONDITION, AND FIND OUT WHERE YOU CAN TURN FOR MORE RESOURCES ON THE SUBJECT.

FOR THOSE WHO THINK THEY MAY HAVE COELIAC DISEASE, CHECK OUT COELIAC UK'S ONLINE ASSESSMENT CALLED 'IS IT COELIAC DISEASE?' SYMPTOMS ARE ASSESSED AND, UPON COMPLETION, ADVICE WILL BE GIVEN AS TO WHETHER FURTHER TESTING IS REQUIRED FROM A GP.

[WWW.ISITCOELIACDISEASE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.ISITCOELIACDISEASE.ORG.UK)