

Good diet helps people manage celiac disease

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Effects of gluten intolerance can be minimized with proper nutrition, expert says.

(HealthDay)—For people with celiac disease, an accurate diagnosis and proper diet are essential for good health, experts say.

Celiac disease is an intolerance to the protein gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye. When people with celiac disease eat gluten-containing foods, the lining of their [small intestine](#) is damaged and can eventually be destroyed, which prevents adequate absorption of nutrients and leads to other health problems, according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

About one of every 141 Americans has celiac disease.

"While the only treatment for celiac disease is a gluten-free [diet](#), the

good news is, once the diet is started, the road to recover begins, and people with celiac disease can lead long, healthy lives," registered dietitian and nutritionist Rachel Begun said in an academy news release.

"Managing celiac disease is not just about eliminating gluten from your diet. It also entails ensuring you get all the vitamins and nutrients your body needs, such as iron, calcium, fiber and B-vitamins like thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folate," she explained.

Many healthy foods are naturally gluten-free, including fruits, vegetables, [lean meats](#), poultry, fish, eggs, beans, legumes, soy, nuts, as well as the grains amaranth, buckwheat, corn, rice, teff and quinoa. Also, there are gluten-free flours made from almond meal, chickpeas and garbanzo beans, brown rice, coconut, potato, sorghum, tapioca and white rice.

An accurate diagnosis is a crucial for people with celiac disease.

"Do not diagnose yourself. If you have any symptoms, talk with your [health care provider](#) and get tested," Begun said. "It's important to keep eating a normal gluten-containing diet while being tested to ensure an accurate diagnosis. If you are diagnosed with celiac disease, a registered dietitian-nutritionist will help you understand which foods are safe to eat and ensure you are getting the important nutrients your body needs."

Celiac disease symptoms can include bloating, gas or abdominal pain, chronic diarrhea or constipation, fatigue, itchy skin rash and tingling in the hands and feet. However, some people with [celiac disease](#) do not have any of these symptoms.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases has more about [celiac disease](#).

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