

The Celiac Center



ORLANDO
HEALTH®



**Arnold Palmer
Hospital**
For Children

Also known as gluten intolerance, **celiac disease** is a digestive disorder that affects one in 133 Americans. Those affected suffer damage to their intestinal lining when they eat specific food-grain antigens, called glutes, that are found in wheat, rye and barley.

Comprehensive Treatment for Celiac Disease

Located at Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children Center for Digestive Health and Nutrition, the Celiac Center is dedicated to helping kids and their families better manage celiac disease. Using state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment methods, our multidisciplinary team of specialized doctors, registered dietitians and a registered nurse work together to create a unique treatment plan for each patient. Our team provides comprehensive evaluation and assessment of celiac disease diagnoses, dietary treatments and health management.

The Celiac Center is committed to treating your child in a warm, caring environment and working around your family's busy schedule. We also offer annual educational events for children and their parents who may also have celiac disease.

How Do You Get Celiac Disease?

Children at higher risk for celiac disease are those who have Type 1 diabetes, autoimmune thyroid disease, dermatitis herpetiformis, Down syndrome, Turner syndrome and Williams syndrome, or have a relative with celiac disease. Someone may still have celiac disease, even though they are not in a group at higher risk.

Celiac disease runs in families. If one person has celiac disease, other family members have a 1 in 10 chance of being affected by it. The disease may appear anytime in a person's life, and it is possible to have celiac disease without knowing it. There are certain genes present in most patients with celiac disease, but it is not known what triggers the damage to the small intestine.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Celiac Disease?

Symptoms may begin at any age once gluten is introduced into the diet. If your child has a lot of stomach aches, diarrhea or weight loss, or in the older child, inadequate rate of weight and height gain, delayed puberty or anemia, you should consult a physician. It may or may not be celiac disease, but a physician can help make that determination by ordering a celiac screening blood test.

Celiac disease can cause different problems depending on the age of your child:

- An infant with celiac disease may have abdominal pain and diarrhea, and may fail to grow and gain weight. The child may have a large stomach, thin thigh muscles and flat buttocks.
- A young child may have abdominal pain with nausea and lack of appetite, anemia (not enough iron in the blood), abnormal liver tests, mouth sores, skin rash and poor weight gain.
- Teenagers may hit puberty late and be short in stature, with or without vomiting and diarrhea. Other symptoms can be blistering, intensely itchy skin, frequently found on the elbows, knees and buttocks, as well as dental enamel defects, bone or joint pain, and unexplained anemia.
- Celiac disease may go undiagnosed for years. Some children may not have any symptoms and still be affected.

Our staff is always willing to accommodate the needs of your patients. Please feel free to contact us with requests, referrals or questions regarding appointments and consultations.

**To schedule an appointment, please call
(321) 841-3338.**

How Do You Diagnose Celiac Disease?

The next step would be to visit a gastroenterologist, a physician who specializes in digestive problems. The physician may find it necessary to perform a biopsy, taking a sample of your child's small intestine to examine. Children are given medications so they are comfortable during the procedure.

What Does Gluten Do to People with Celiac Disease?

Gluten damages the intestines, which keeps the body from taking in many of the nutrients in the food your child consumes. These include vitamins, calcium, protein, carbohydrates, fats and other important nutrients. Your child's body can't work well without these nutrients.

How is Celiac Disease Treated?

At this time, there is no cure for celiac disease. Treatment consists of a lifelong avoidance of gluten-containing foods, such as bread, cereal, cakes, pizza and other food products or additives containing wheat, rye and barley.

When gluten is removed from the diet, the small intestine will start to heal and overall health improves. Medication is normally not required. A milk-sugar (lactose) intolerance may be present; therefore, the consumption of Lactaid milk and the use of Lactaid enzyme products may be required for several weeks. Decreased bone density (called osteopenia) can accompany celiac disease, and a bone density measurement may be needed. Your child's physician may suggest nutritional supplements to correct any deficiencies. Follow-up appointments will be scheduled to monitor the child's response to the gluten-free diet.

Adapting to the gluten-free diet requires significant lifestyle changes. It is essential to read labels, which are often imprecise, and to learn how to identify ingredients that may contain hidden gluten. Be aware that hidden gluten can be found in some unlikely foods, such as cold cuts, soups, hard candies, soy sauce, many low- or non-fat products, and even licorice and jelly beans. Gluten may also be present as a binder in some pharmaceutical products. Request clarification from food and drug manufacturers when necessary.

The gluten-free diet should be continued for life.

Healthier Kids, Stronger Families.

Orlando Health
Arnold Palmer
Hospital for Children
has provided
compassionate care
to the children,
teenagers and
young adults of
Central Florida for
more than 30 years.
Led by dedicated
doctors, specialists
and caregivers,
Orlando Health Arnold
Palmer offers a wide
range of advanced
pediatric services in
an environment built
just for kids.



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To learn more, visit
ArnoldPalmerHospital.com/KidsCeliac

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