

Coeliac Disease

An inflammatory bowel disease
caused by a hypersensitivity
reaction to gluten

Coeliac Disease

- Gluten and similar proteins are found in wheat, oats, barley, rye and other hybrid grains
- The exact cause of coeliac disease is unknown
- It appears to have a hereditary link as its incidence is much higher in siblings

Coeliac Disease

- Coeliac disease causes the intestinal villi to become flattened and they lose their ability to absorb nutrients
- Symptoms usually occur in babies within 6 months of introducing gluten into their diet
- Incidence 1 in 25,000
- Risk factors include family history, female sex, European Caucasians

Coeliac Disease

- Conditions that may be associated with coeliac disease include:
 - Lactose intolerance
 - Dermatitis herpetiformis
 - Insulin dependent diabetes
 - SLE
 - Thyroid disease
 - Autoimmune disorders

Symptoms in Children & Infants

- Abnormal stools – clay coloured, foul smelling
- Diarrhoea
- Slow Growth
- Irritability
- Bloody Stools
- Vomiting
- Weight Loss
- Anorexia
- Limb muscle wasting
- Abdominal Distention

Symptoms in Adults

- Abnormal appearance of teeth
- Abdominal Distention
- Abdominal Pain
- Bone Pain
- Breathlessness (Anaemia)
- Depression
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Muscle Cramps
- Weight Loss
- Vomiting

Investigations

- Most patients will have symptoms of malabsorption
- Some patients may also have bone disease, anaemia or other conditions
- Dental examination may reveal changes in the enamel of the teeth which includes symmetrical changes to enamel colour and texture.

Investigations

- Blood analysis may reveal anaemia
- Intestinal biopsy may reveal abnormal changes to the mucosa.

Treatment

- A life long gluten free diet is required
- This will allow the villi to heal
- Vitamin and mineral supplementation may be required
- Occasionally, corticosteroids may be required

Prognosis

- Untreated, the condition can cause the development of life threatening complications
- Symptoms usually disappear within a few weeks of the elimination of gluten from the diet
- If gluten is re-introduced into the diet, the symptoms will return

Complications

- Osteomalacia
- Pancreas Disorders
- Polyneuropathy
- Infertility
- Spontaneous Abortion
- Increased risk of lymphoma and intestinal cancer