

Celiac Disease in Children

Uncomfortable—but treatable with the right approach.

What is Celiac Disease?

Celiac Disease is an autoimmune condition where the body reacts to gluten—a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. When someone with celiac disease eats gluten, it triggers an immune response that damages the lining of the small intestine, making it hard for the body to absorb important nutrients.

This condition can affect children at any age and may show up in different ways. The good news is—with the right care and support—children with celiac disease can thrive!

Common Symptoms in Children

- Ongoing stomach pain or bloating
- Chronic diarrhea or constipation
- Pale, foul-smelling stools
- Poor weight gain or weight loss
- Fatigue or irritability
- Slow growth or delayed puberty
- Iron-deficiency anemia not responding to treatment
- Skin rashes (such as dermatitis herpetiformis)

How is it Diagnosed?

Diagnosis involves:

- Blood tests to look for specific antibodies linked to celiac disease.

- If blood tests are positive, a referral to a specialist (gastroenterologist) for further evaluation, often including an intestinal biopsy

Important: Your child must be eating gluten regularly before testing—removing gluten too early can lead to false negatives.

The Gluten-Free Diet: Main Treatment

There is no medication for celiac disease, but a strict, lifelong gluten-free diet allows the intestine to heal and symptoms to improve.

What to avoid:

- Foods made with wheat, barley, rye
- Common foods like bread, pasta, cereals, baked goods, unless labeled gluten-free
- Some sauces, gravies, and processed foods (read labels carefully!)

Safe alternatives:

- Rice, quinoa, corn, potatoes, millet
- Fruits, vegetables, legumes, dairy, and meats (unprocessed)
- Gluten-free labeled products

Work closely with a registered dietitian to ensure your child is getting all necessary nutrients.

Living with Celiac

Celiac disease can feel overwhelming at first—but with support, your child can live a full and healthy life.

- Keep the kitchen gluten-safe (separate toasters, utensils, etc.)
- Teach your child about reading labels and asking questions
- Inform schools, caregivers, and friends
- Find support groups or communities that understand your journey
- Consider vitamin or mineral supplements if recommended by your doctor

When to see a Doctor

Reach out if your child:

- Continues to have symptoms despite a gluten-free diet
- Shows signs of nutritional deficiencies (e.g., hair thinning, low energy)
- Has new symptoms like unexplained rashes, joint pain, or delayed growth

A Note from Our Clinic

At the Kids Care Clinic, we understand that a diagnosis like celiac disease affects the whole family. We're here to support you with education, referrals, and guidance every step of the way.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our team.