

BOUNTIFULLY HEALTHY

# WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac Disease is a hereditary genetic autoimmune condition.

Let's break this down...

When you are born, you **inherit this genetic condition**. Both or one of your parents passed the genes onto you. These genes are called **HLA-DQ2 and HLA DQ8**. You carry both or one of these genes. Being a carrier of the genes does not mean a person has Celiac disease in itself. It means that you are **predisposed** to developing Celiac Disease. It still requires the genes to be switched on.

In South Africa, according to one study, it is believed that the prevalence of the genes is about 19.8% in the population, and about 30% prevalence in the USA.

## **How do you know if you carry the genes?**

The only way to know is to get a **genetic test**. I am a DNAylsis accredited\_practitioner and can assist you in choosing the right DNA genetic test and provide you with a feedback consultation. A genetic test is a valuable tool to have at your disposal. Should you test negative for these genes, you can be assured that you do not (and cannot ever) develop Celiac Disease. However a positive test can give you useful information in seeking further medical care.

A genetic test can also help you see what nutrient deficiencies you are predisposed to, so that you can get the necessary blood tests to check the live time application.

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# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CD?

Celiac Disease has a broad spectrum of symptoms. You may not experience all of them.

It is also good to note that Celiac Disease can be silent or **asymptomatic** (no symptoms) This is rare but it does happen. It can be picked up in a biopsy during a routine examination.

Celiac Symptoms can be divided into four groups:  
Classical symptoms, non-classic, silent and refractory

**Classic:** Abdominal pain, bloating and gas, diarrhea, vomiting tingling sensations in the extremities, weight loss

**Non-classic:** constipation, abdominal pain, bloating, (weight: some people experience no change in weight and some may be overweight) headaches, brain fog, nausea, joint pain, and many others

**Silent:** there are no symptoms. It is sometimes picked up during by accident or during another proce

**Refractory:** This is when someone doesn't respond to a gluten-free diet and continues to experience villous atrophy.

# WHAT IF I AM ALREADY OFF GLUTEN?

Testing requires you to be on a **normal gluten-containing diet** in order to pick up the antibodies associated with Celiac Disease.

But what if you already removed gluten from your diet and you are feeling better and now you do not want to go back onto it?

This is one of the most common problems regarding gluten. Many people are unaware of the tests and procedures in place, and so they remove gluten from their diet without consulting their medical care provider and find that they feel better on a gluten-free diet. The problem with this is that they do not know now if they have Celiac disease or not. For some people this is not important and for others, they would want to know.

The **Gluten Challenge** is when you reintroduce gluten back into your diet. This equates to about **2 slices of wheat bread a day for about 8-12 weeks** and then going for the serology test. This time period is recommended as it takes time for the body to produce antibodies. Of course, your body will only produce antibodies if you carry the genetics.

Some people react so negatively to this challenge, that they never finish the challenge because of how terrible they feel on it and so it still does not result in them being able to do a successful serology test.

For some the gluten challenge is not an option. This is when a genetic test could prove very useful. As stated though, just because you carry the genes does not mean they have been activated.