

## THE COMPLEXITIES OF GLUTEN INTOLERANCE

Gluten and wheat allergies are gaining attention in the media as more and more people try to diagnose these conditions themselves, which creates a dangerous precedent that belies the potential severity of the condition.

Understanding the nature of the various gluten-related conditions is not easy. The phrase “gluten intolerance” refers to an entire category of gluten issues, including celiac disease, non-celiac gluten sensitivity and wheat allergy.

### WHAT IS CELIAC?

Celiac disease, an inherited autoimmune disorder that affects the digestive process of the small intestine, affects one in 100 people. The only treatment is a gluten-free diet. When someone with celiac disease eats even tiny amounts of gluten, their immune system attacks the lining of the small intestine. This can lead to malnutrition.

### WHAT IS NON-CELIAC GLUTEN SENSITIVITY?

“Non-celiac gluten sensitivity” (also known as “gluten intolerance”) causes the body to mount a stress response of gastrointestinal symptoms that differ considerably from the intestine-damaging effects of celiac disease.)

### WHAT IS A WHEAT ALLERGY?

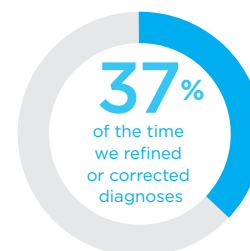
In wheat allergies, the immune system responds negatively to a food protein, but the response is brief and will not cause lasting harm to body tissues.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CELIAC AND NON-CELIAC GLUTEN SENSITIVITY?

Non-celiac gluten sensitivity is not hereditary, and it is a completely separate, more common condition than celiac disease. But both conditions cause intestinal symptoms, such as bloating and pain, and symptoms outside the digestive tract, such as fatigue and absent-mindedness.

### SO WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS FROM GLUTEN?

The complexities of all these various gluten-related conditions makes it impossible to self-diagnose. If you have any gastrointestinal symptoms, you should see your physician before you start a gluten-free diet.



**If you have been diagnosed with celiac or are facing a medical decision,  
Best Doctors is here to help.**

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