

## Featured Doctor



### Full Name:

Robert S. Fishman, M.D.

- Board Certified in Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Medical degree from Harvard Medical School
- Fellowship in Gastroenterology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN after achieving Major Rank in US Air Force
- Practicing in Delray Beach and Boca Raton since 1978
- Former Clinical Assistant Professor at Florida Atlantic University Regional

### Tips for Eating Healthy on a Gluten-Free (GF) Diet

Melissa Ventura-Marra, PhD, RD, L/DN

- ✓ Eat less processed foods. Check labels for any gluten-containing additives.
- ✓ Focus on wholesome, naturally gluten-free foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, lean meats and some low-fat dairy.
- ✓ Get enough B-vitamins and fiber. Visit our website for examples.
- ✓ Watch your portions – GF products can be high in calories.
- ✓ If you are weight conscious, be aware of serving size and compare labels.
- ✓ Consider a GF multivitamin and mineral supplement.

Help us fight Colon Cancer!  
Join Team Digestive CARE  
January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
at the Undy 5000 - West Palm Beach  
Visit our website for information.

## CELIAC DISEASE – GLUTEN VS. THE SMALL INTESTINE

### Robert Fishman, M.D.

#### INTRODUCTION

Celiac (pronounced SEE-lee-ak) disease, also known as celiac sprue, is a digestive disorder triggered by consumption of gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye and barley. Bread, pasta, cereals, cookies, pizza, many alcoholic beverages and numerous other foods typically contain gluten. In those people with celiac disease, gluten damages the small intestine via an immune reaction. This reaction causes damage or destruction of villi—the tiny, fingerlike protrusions lining the small intestine. Villi normally allow nutrients from food to be absorbed through the walls of the small intestine into the bloodstream. Without healthy villi, nutrients such as fat, protein, vitamins and minerals are eliminated in the stool, rather than being absorbed.

Originally thought to be a rare childhood syndrome, celiac disease is now known to be a common genetic disorder prevalent in adults around the world. More than 2 million people in the United States have the disease, or about 1 in 133 people. Among those who have a first-degree relative—a parent, sibling or child—diagnosed with celiac disease, 1 in 22 people may have the disease. In many people the disease is recognized only after many years, or perhaps never.

The symptoms of celiac disease vary greatly. Many people with the disease have digestive complaints such as diarrhea, bloating, abdominal pain and gaseousness. Even worse, they may also have malnutrition, weight loss, anemia, bone disorders, lactose intolerance and even increased risk of intestinal cancers.

Some people with celiac disease have no gastrointestinal symptoms at all. In those people, celiac disease may present itself in less obvious ways, including: iron deficiency anemia, joint pain, skin rash, depression, and liver disorders.

#### DIAGNOSIS AND TESTING

Your doctor will usually begin with a blood test looking for high blood levels of certain antibodies such as anti-tissue transglutaminase antibodies [TTGA].

If blood tests and symptoms suggest celiac disease, the diagnosis will be confirmed by taking a biopsy of the small intestine. To obtain a biopsy, your gastroenterologist inserts [while you are asleep under light sedation] a thin, flexible endoscope through your mouth, esophagus and stomach into your small intestine and takes a small sample of intestinal tissue to be examined microscopically, looking for the damaged villi typical of celiac disease.

In occasional cases, your doctor may need to examine the entire small intestine [15 to 20 feet in length]. This is best accomplished by capsule endoscopy – swallowing a pill-sized camera which takes thousands of pictures as it passes through the small intestine.

#### TREATMENT OF CELIAC DISEASE

The only treatment for celiac disease is a gluten-free diet. It is surprising how many foods and non-food substances contain even small amounts of gluten. If you have celiac disease, your doctor will likely recommend consultation with a Registered Dietitian. You will learn which foods contain gluten and how to effectively check ingredients of foods in all settings. Many grocery stores and restaurants now actively market their gluten-free products. Because of heightened public and industry awareness in recent years, adhering to a gluten-free diet has become a much simpler and less burdensome matter.

Response to a gluten-free diet is not overnight. Although some improvement may be felt within days, it may take weeks or even months for symptoms to be gone, and even longer for the intestine to completely heal. Ultimately, though, most patients will return to a normal healthy life.

Additional Resources on Celiac Disease are available on our Website under “Links”

Completely dedicated to providing you the BEST Gastroenterologists!

[www.DigestiveCAREOnline.com](http://www.DigestiveCAREOnline.com)