

## Who is GIG?

The Gluten Intolerance Group of North America (GIG) is an internationally respected leader in the gluten-free community and is at the forefront of innovative programs that improve the lives of all persons following a gluten-free lifestyle.

The Gluten Intolerance Group of North America mission is to provide support to persons with gluten-related disorders in order to live healthy lives.

GIG fulfills its mission through direct and indirect programs that improve the quality of life for gluten-free consumers. GIG programs include:

- Social Programs of support and education
- Awareness and advocacy efforts
- Food industry programs of support and education, and product certification
- Research awareness and support

### GIG....

- **is dedicated to providing accurate, scientific, evidence-based information.**
- **is a good steward of donations and resources.**
- **is transparent.**
- **abides by the Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice for Nonprofits.**
- **is a Valued Partner in the GuideStar Exchange-Partners in Trust program.**
- **is a member of the Health and Medical Research Charities of America.**
- **is a member of the Combined Federal Campaign.**
- **has been awarded the Best in America designation for Independent Charities of America.**

## GIG PROGRAMS

### SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

Support and education are provided to consumers, health professionals, food manufacturers, restaurants and other food service establishments.

### FOOD INDUSTRY, RESTAURANT AND FOOD SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) works with manufacturers to provide unmatched verification that their products are gluten-free, through independent testing and plant inspections. The Gluten-Free Food Service Accreditation Program (GFFS) provides education, training and support to help food service establishments reliably provide gluten-free food to their customers.

### AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

Awareness initiatives include print and radio campaigns, "Chef to Plate" international awareness campaign, articles, interviews, and lectures. GIG is also a productive member of a number of coalitions to bring about increased awareness of gluten-related disorders.

### RESEARCH AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

GIG supports research projects by providing information to patients about available study participation opportunities. GIG encourages support of research through advocacy efforts. GIG provides some financial support to research.

For More Information in Your Area Contact:



**GLUTEN  
INTOLERANCE  
GROUP**

A non-profit  
organization serving  
those of all ages with  
gluten-related disorders  
since 1974

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## Gluten-Related Disorders

Gluten-related disorders include **celiac disease** (CD) **dermatitis herpetiformis** (DH), and **non celiac gluten sensitivity** (NCGS). In these disorders, gluten protein fractions in wheat, rye and barley set off reactions that lead to a number of symptoms. Celiac disease involves destruction of the lining of the small intestine. Celiac disease is more than a gastrointestinal disorder; it is a multi-system disorder, often without GI symptoms. Dermatitis herpetiformis may involve damage to the small intestinal lining and includes a skin reaction where antibody deposits trigger itchy, blistering skin eruptions.

Some individuals who develop an adverse reaction when eating gluten products and show improvement when following a gluten-free diet may have a form of **non celiac gluten sensitivity** (NCGS). Research into NCGS has been limited until recently. NCGS differs from celiac disease in that it is thought to involve an innate immune response, rather than the autoimmune response found with celiac disease. It is not thought that NCGS involves damage to the small intestine.

The prevalence of CD in the USA is approximately 1 in 100 persons. The true prevalence of NCGS is unknown but estimates indicate that it could possibly be 6 to 7 times higher than that of CD, making the incidence of gluten-related disorders as high as 1:25 persons.

## Symptoms

All gluten-related disorders may present with a wide range of symptoms, making diagnosis difficult. Symptoms seen in celiac disease, dermatitis herpetiformis and non celiac gluten sensitivity can include: chronic fatigue or pain syndrome, flu-like symptoms, migraines, behavior, memory and learning challenges, growth and maturation issues, balance and other neurological complaints; diarrhea, constipation or both, anemia, bone disease and infertility. In NCGS, there tends to be a greater prevalence of non-intestinal symptoms.

## Diagnosis

Always get tested before starting a gluten-free diet. Being on a gluten-free diet before testing may alter the results, giving false negative tests.

Blood tests to screen for celiac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis look for the presence of the following antibodies:

- anti-tissue transglutaminase (tTG)
- endomysial (EMA)
- deamidated antigliadin (DGP)

Because no one of these tests is ideal, panels are often used. The most sensitive antibody tests are of the IgA class, but IgG tests need to be used in patients with IgA deficiency.

There are currently no specific blood tests to screen for NCGS. Diagnosis is based on ruling out CD and other possible causes of symptoms (such as wheat allergy).

Therefore the first step to diagnosing NCGS includes the same blood tests used for CD and DH screening.

The above blood tests together are considered to be the most specific and sensitive for CD and DH. If these tests indicate the possibility of CD, a small intestine biopsy is done: this is considered the “gold standard” for diagnosis of CD. A skin biopsy is the gold standard for diagnosis of DH. When a diagnosis of CD or DH is uncertain, HLA DQ2 and DQ8 testing can identify a person’s genetic tendency to develop celiac disease. Persons diagnosed with DH may be referred to a gastroenterologist for GI work-up as well. In the case of NCGS, small intestine biopsy would be negative. Diagnosis of NCGS is based on ruling out CD and other possible causes of symptoms, and responsiveness to a gluten-free diet.

## Treatment

The only treatment available for gluten-related disorders at this time is a strict gluten-free diet. Avoiding gluten proteins found in wheat, rye, and barley is essential to good health. Each exposure to gluten may cause symptoms, and for persons with CD or DH, damage to the intestines.

With proper substitutions, the gluten-free diet can be nutritious, varied, appealing and tasty.

Join GIG now! New members receive a membership packet, including a subscription for 1 year to the GIG Quarterly Magazine, a Quick Reference Ingredient Card useful when shopping, as well as discounts on programs and other helpful information.

USA Membership - \$35.00 per year

Student - \$25.00 per year

Senior Discount - \$28.00 per year

Canada and Mexico Residents - \$50.00 per year

Other Countries - \$55.00 per year

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