

An estimated 2.5 million Americans have undiagnosed celiac disease and may be at risk for permanent intestinal damage. At Pioneer GI Clinic, the board-certified gastroenterologists offer on-site blood testing to confirm celiac disease. They also use advanced endoscopy technology to identify damage to your intestine in the earliest stages. Through diet changes and medications, you can find long-lasting relief of celiac disease symptoms and protect your long-term gastrointestinal health.

What is celiac disease?

Celiac disease develops because of an immune system reaction to the protein gluten. Gluten is in barley, wheat, and rye, and eating any amount of it causes an immune response in your small intestine.

Over time, this reaction can lead to damage to the lining of your intestine. This damage can prevent the absorption of essential nutrients from your diet that your body needs to function.

The underlying cause of celiac disease isn't well understood, but your genetic background contributes to the condition. You may be at a higher risk for developing celiac disease if you have a family history of it or if you have Type 1 diabetes or other autoimmune disorders.

While there's no cure for celiac disease, you can learn to manage it in the long term with the proper diagnosis and treatment plan.

When should I seek treatment for celiac disease?

You should schedule a diagnostic evaluation at Pioneer GI Clinic if you have unexplained symptoms that affect your gastrointestinal health. Symptoms of celiac disease can vary from person to person and include:

- Gas
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Persistent fatigue
- Weight loss

Celiac disease can also cause anemia (iron deficiency), bone loss (osteoporosis), mouth ulcers, and tingling or numbness in your feet and hands.

The providers offer two types of blood tests in-office to confirm celiac disease. They may also perform an endoscopy or capsule endoscopy to check your small intestine for damage.

How is celiac disease treated?

The only way to manage celiac disease is to follow a gluten-free diet for the rest of your life. The Pioneer GI Clinic physicians can teach you how to identify gluten in the foods you eat and the medicines you take. Gluten can also hide in other nonfood products, including:

- Vitamins
- Herbal supplements
- Toothpaste and mouthwash
- Envelope glue
- Modified starches and food preservatives

As you stop eating gluten, inflammation in your intestine resolves and the tissue begins healing.

The gastroenterologists may recommend gluten-free supplements to treat any vitamin deficiencies you may already have from celiac disease.

If you have severe intestinal damage, you may need steroids to control inflammation. You also need to visit the office for routine checkups to ensure your intestine is healing and that your gluten-free diet is preventing symptoms.

To schedule diagnostic testing for celiac disease, call Pioneer GI Clinic today.