Understanding Celiac Disease

What is Celiac Disease?

An intestinal disease with wide spectrum of clinical manifestations, ranging from asymptomatic to severe malabsorption, caused by a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors:

- Intrinsic factor is genetics imprinting the susceptibility of an individual to be gluten-sensitive in intestine
- Extrinsic factor is the environmental factor, i.e., the presence of gluten

In genetically susceptible individuals, their intestines are characterized by damaged mucosa and hence many secondary problems associated.

Prolonged untreated celiac disease, even if clinically silent, predisposes for other autoimmune diseases.

How Celiac Disease Affects Our Body?

Damages on the mucous layer of the small intestine by own immune system are often observed in celiac disease. The damages are most marked in the duodenum and upper jejunum, but in some cases, the entire small intestine may be involved.

Typical & Classic Symptoms:

- Chronic diarrhea
- Failure to thrive
- Abdominal distention

In Accordance to a research paper published by American Gastroenterological Association in 2001, below are the symptoms that usually appear secondary to malabsorption of nutrients due to small intestine destruction. They are atypical because they only appear in Celiac Disease patients occasionally. Even if they do show up, they are usually considered to be medical conditions occurring alone and may often be ignored their possible correlations with Celiac Disease.

Systemically speaking, Celiac Disease has its impact on our body usually secondary to malabsorption due to destructions on the mucous layer of the small intestine.

Atypical Symptoms (Secondary to Malabsorption)

- Sideropenic anemia
- Short stature
- Osteopenia
- Recurrent abortions
- Hepatic steatosis
- Recurrent abdominal pain
- Gaseousness

There are also a number of atypical symptoms independent of malabsorption.

Atypical Symptoms (Independent of Maladsorption)

- Dermatitis herpetiformis
- Dental enamel hypoplasia
- Ataxia
- Alopecia
- Primary biliary cirrhosis
- Isolated hypertransaminasemia
- Recurrent aphthous stomatitis
- Myasthenia gravis
- Recurrent pericarditis
- Psoriasis
- Dental enamel hypoplasia
- Epilepsy (with or without intracranial calcifications)
- Vasculitis
- Dilatative cardiomyopathy
- Hypo/Hyperthyroidism

Who will be affected?

Celiac disease symptoms can develop at any age when foods in your diet are containing gluten. Not only children, individuals aged between 30 and 60 years are determined as a group with high occurrence of having celiac disease.

- High risk group: First-degree relatives of a person (parents, children, siblings) with celiac disease have around 10% chance of having this condition
- Adults: Genetically susceptible adults who are consuming gluten, acute symptoms are sometimes triggered by stress, infections, surgery or pregnancy
- Children: Recurrent gastrointestinal infections can be a factor in the expression of this disease
- Typical symptoms like chronic diarrhea, failure to thrive and abdominal distention, are commonly seen in Celiac Disease patients. With these recurrent symptoms alone or in combination, one should consider taking the Celiac Screening

What are gluten and gliadin?

Gluten is a general name for the proteins found in wheat (varieties of wheat include: durum, emmer, spelt, farina, farro, kamut and einkorn), rye, barley and triticale.

Gliadin is one of the main protein component in gluten. The test is used to help find out whether you have celiac disease, an autoimmune disease by looking at the reaction to Gliadin.

Source and lab test service provider: HK Biotek

Enquiry

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