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## Student Wellness Centre

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[wellness.usask.ca](http://wellness.usask.ca)

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UNIVERSITY OF  
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# Celiac Disease

## What is celiac disease?

Health Canada defines celiac disease as a genetic disease. The symptoms are triggered by the consumption of gluten. The body's immune system responds abnormally to the gluten, which damages the lining of the small intestine. This can cause problems absorbing nutrients from food. Even though it elicits an immune response, it is normally classified as an allergy.

## Treatment

The only treatment is to go on a strictly gluten-free diet so the intestine can heal. It is important to be properly diagnosed by a medical physician before claiming to have celiac disease. It is also important to continue eating gluten until being tested for the disease.

## For more information

- Health Canada:  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/celiac](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/celiac)
- Celiac: [www.celiac.ca](http://www.celiac.ca).

# **Irritable Bowel Syndrome**

## **What is irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)?**

A common functional gastrointestinal disorder that many people experience. This disorder is classified as a food intolerance. There are many symptoms such as lower abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating, distension, and altered bowel habit. Diagnosis should be made by a medical professional.

## **Treatment**

The most effective treatment for IBS is a low FODMAP diet. This diet is administered in two phases. The first phase is to strictly eliminate the foods that are high in FODMAPs. This should be done for about 6-8 weeks and under the supervision of a registered dietitian. The second phase is to add each food back into diet in small amounts to find the type and amount of the food that can be tolerated. The low FODMAP diet has been found to be 68-76% effective in people with IBS.

## **What Does FODMAP Stand For?**

**F:** Fermentable

**O:** Oligosaccharides

**D:** Disaccharides

**M:** Monosaccharide

**A:** And

**P:** Polyols

### **For more information**

- [www.med.monash.edu](http://www.med.monash.edu)
- [www.cdhf.ca](http://www.cdhf.ca)

## **Food Allergies**

### **What is a food allergy?**

Health Canada defines food allergies as sensitivities caused by a reaction of body's immune system to be specific proteins in food. Food allergies are also known as food hypersensitivity.

### **The most common foods that cause allergies**

- Peanuts,
- Tree nuts,
- Sesame seeds,
- Milk,
- Fish,
- Eggs,
- Soy,
- Wheat, and
- Sulphites.

### **Symptoms**

- Trouble breathing or swallowing,

- A drop in blood pressure or loss of consciousness,
- Flushed face, rash, hives, or itchy skin, and
- Swelling of the face, tongue, lips, or throat.

There is currently no cure for food allergies. There is research being done on desensitizing individuals to their food allergies but it is not recommended because not enough research has been done. The most appropriate method of prevention is to completely avoid the specific food.

### **Tips for individuals with severe allergies**

- Carry an EpiPen,
- Avoid even trace amounts of the foods you are allergic to, and
- Consider wearing a medic alert bracelet so others will be aware of your allergies.

## **Intolerance**

### **What is a food intolerance?**

Health Canada defines food intolerance as a food sensitivity that does not involve the immune system. With a food allergy, only a small amount of food can cause a reaction. In food intolerance it usually takes a

normal sized portion to cause a reaction. The amount that it takes for a reaction to occur varies from person to person.

## **Symptoms**

Symptoms vary and sometimes can be mistaken for food allergies. Food intolerance symptoms usually originate in the gastrointestinal system. They are caused by the inability to digest or absorb certain components of food.

## **Treatment**

Food intolerance is harder to diagnose because there are no immunoglobulins to measure. It is often possible to build up tolerance to the foods that may cause a reaction. This is done through food exclusion and then reintroduction. If this does not help, some people may choose to continue to avoid consumption of the food.

## **For more information**

- Health Canada: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

# **Sensitivity**

## **What is a food sensitivity?**

Health Canada defines food sensitivity as an adverse effect to a food that other people can eat safely. This vague definition causes confusion among

people. Food sensitivity could mean food allergy or food intolerance.

## **Controversy**

There is some controversy about whether or not gluten sensitivity is a separate condition from gluten intolerance because no clear definition exists. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley products. Gluten sensitivity has been used interchangeably with celiac disease and gluten intolerance in medical literature. People that claim to have gluten sensitivity test negative for celiac disease and wheat allergy but symptoms seem to disappear with a gluten-free diet. More research is being done to find a specific definition and cause of gluten sensitivity.

For more information, visit a Dietitian at the Student Wellness Centre on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Place Riel Student Centre.

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## **Additional Resources**

[wellness.usask.ca](https://wellness.usask.ca)

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