

Especially for Women

Could gluten be causing your symptoms?

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Some symptoms of gluten-related disorders (celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity) are also more likely to exist in women than men in general. Therefore, if you have any of these conditions or symptoms, it's important to consider both gluten-related disorders and non-gluten-related issues as possible causes.

Consult with your healthcare provider before giving up gluten. Otherwise testing for gluten-related disorders may be invalid and diagnosis difficult.

CONDITION	RELEVANCE TO WOMEN	RELEVANCE TO GLUTEN-RELATED DISORDERS
Bone Health	The risk of osteopenia or osteoporosis is greater for women than men; women have less bone tissue and lose bone faster due to hormonal changes related to menopause.	In celiac disease, bone density is often compromised since the intestine's damaged cells cannot absorb calcium and other nutrients necessary for bone health adequately.
Anemia	Women of childbearing age are at greater risk of iron deficiency anemia due to blood loss during menstruation.	Anemia is often an early symptom of celiac disease, resulting from the intestine's inability to absorb iron normally.
Chronic Fatigue	Women are two to four times more likely to be diagnosed with chronic fatigue, than men.	May be a symptom of both celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity.
Depression & Anxiety	More common among women than men.	Possible symptoms of celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity.
Other Autoimmune Diseases	Approximately 80% of individuals with autoimmune diseases are women.	Celiac disease is an autoimmune condition. Those with one autoimmune condition are at higher risk of developing another.
Fertility		Research indicates there is a correlation between untreated celiac disease and decreased fertility.

This educational bulletin has been produced by the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America, a registered 501(c)3 organization. Learn more about GIG at www.gluten.org.

GIG is on a mission to make life easier for everyone living gluten-free.

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Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG)
 31214 - 124th Ave. S.E.
 Auburn, WA 98092-3667
 Phone: 253-833-6655
 Fax: 253-833-6675
customerservice@gluten.org

Advances in gluten-related disorders are fast-paced. If this document is more than 2 years old, please visit gluten.org for updated documents.

References:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/chronic-fatigue-syndrome#:~:text=Experts%20think%20ME%2FCFS%20affects,often%20as%20adults%20or%20adolescents.>

Angum F, Khan T, Kaler J, Siddiqui L, Hussain A. The Prevalence of Autoimmune Disorders in Women: A Narrative Review. *Cureus*. 2020;12(5):e8094. Published 2020 May 13. doi:10.7759/cureus.8094

This article has been reviewed by a dietitian/nutritionist.