

Dental Effects of Celiac Disease

- **Tooth Wear** – Studies have shown patients with Celiac Disease are three times more likely to show signs of worn dentition. This high prevalence of tooth wear can be caused by several different factors, including grinding/clenching of teeth during sleep, age, and malocclusion (top and bottom teeth not biting against each other properly).
- **Enamel Hypoplasia** – This is a nutritionally related defect of dental enamel, presenting in varying degrees. This can range from small white, decalcified spots in pits, lines, and grooves of teeth all the way to partial or complete loss of enamel on a tooth. Hypoplasia is more prevalent in children with Celiac Disease, compared with adults.
- **Recurrent Aphthous Ulcers (Canker Sores)** – These sores can be correlated to many medical conditions, making them unspecific to Celiac Disease, though their prevalence is known to be higher in these patients. Canker sores have been noted to regress once a patient is adhering to a strict gluten-free diet; they likely will still recur but on a less frequent basis.
- **Delayed eruption of teeth** – One final dental effect shown to be correlated to Celiac Disease is both primary and permanent teeth erupting into the mouth later than is expected. This delayed eruption can lead to malocclusion and these patients are more likely to require orthodontic work.

What Can You Do?

- **Worn teeth** – Once the cause is identified, varying types of therapy ranging from an occlusal appliance (nightguard) to orthodontic work may be recommended.
- **Hypoplasia** – Meticulous home care. Defective enamel is more prone to cavity formation, so adhering to a strict oral home care regimen is paramount. Additional fluoride applications may be necessary. If these areas are of cosmetic concern treatment options may be available to correct the issue.
- **Canker Sores** – Depending on the frequency and severity of these sores, varying degrees of palliative treatment are available, though there is no “cure” for these lesions. Treatment options include nutritional supplements (Vitamin B12), various topical agents, mouthwashes, and for more severe cases steroid use may be indicated.

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What Is Celiac Disease?

Celiac Disease (CD) occurs when gluten spurs your immune system to attack the lining of your small intestine. The resulting intestinal damage, called villous atrophy, can cause malnutrition among many other illnesses.

A related but separate condition, known as gluten sensitivity or gluten intolerance, exists that produces similar symptoms as CD. A person with gluten sensitivity experiences a direct reaction to gluten, as opposed to the immune system's attack on its own tissues in the case of CD. A blood test can be done to diagnose CD, and if that is negative then you would participate in a "gluten challenge" (eliminating gluten from your diet, then reintroducing it) to be diagnosed with gluten sensitivity.

Common Symptoms:

Headache
Migraines
Chronic Fatigue
Acne
Brittle Nails
Low Vitamin D
Eczema
Anxiety
Depression

Gluten-Free Dental Products:

Crest
Colgate
Aquafresh
Clinpro
Tom's of Maine
Alcohol-Free Listerine
Orajel
Oral-B Stages Kids Toothpaste
Tanner's Tasty Paste

All products used in our office are gluten-free.