

What to Expect at your Gastroenterologist’s Visit

1. Key Points:

- If you think you might have celiac disease, you will need to visit a gastroenterologist.
- For your visit, bring copies of previous blood tests and a list of your ongoing medications (including doses, if possible).
- Write down all your questions/concerns and bring them to your visits.
- You are encouraged to bring a friend or family member for support.
- If your doctor suspects celiac disease, he/she will order some blood tests and schedule an upper endoscopy.
- If you are diagnosed with celiac disease, follow-up visits are needed to guide you through your healing process.
- Do not hesitate to contact your doctor if you have questions or concerns after your visit.

2. Visiting your Gastroenterologist:

a) First visit:

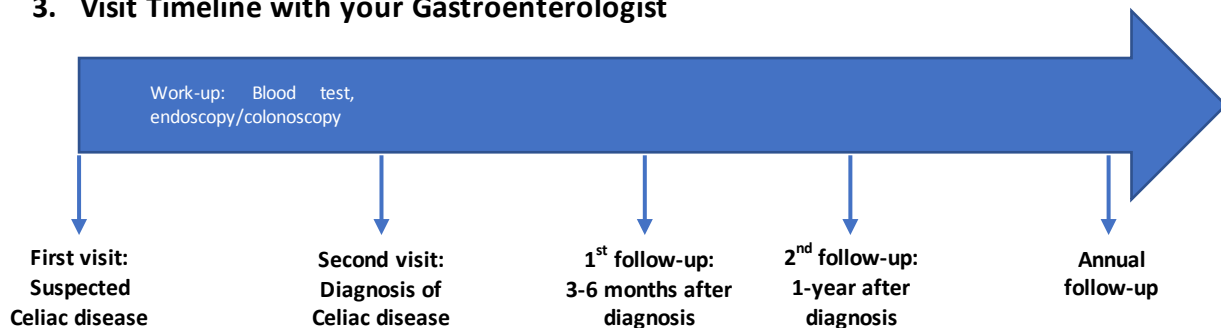
You will describe/share your:	As needed, you will be offered:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symptoms: gastrointestinal (diarrhea, bloating, belly pain, etc.) and others (skin/nail problems, fatigue, changes in hair, etc.)• Past medical history: prior illnesses and surgeries• Family history• Diet history: what you eat and drink• Current medications: name and dose• Supplements: (for example: iron, multivitamin, vitamin D, calcium, etc.)• Allergies to medications and food• Family history• Social history: education, employment, smoking, drugs, and alcohol use• Prior results: blood tests for celiac	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A physical exam focused on your symptoms• Answers to your questions/concerns• Education about celiac disease/gluten free diet.• An order for blood tests and imaging tests• A referral to visit a registered dietitian for gluten-free diet counseling Visit “What to Expect at Your Nutrition Visit”.• A medical order to schedule an upper endoscopy (and, if needed, colonoscopy)• Follow-up visits

disease, endoscopy report, and abdominal images	
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b) Follow-up visit:

You will describe your:	As needed, you will be offered:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New symptoms, if any • Improvement/change in previous symptoms • Diet history: (diet changes, possible food triggers, questions about following a gluten-free diet) • Current medications: (name and dose. If the doctor prescribed any medication, explain how it affects your symptoms.) • Supplements: (for example: iron, multivitamin, vitamin D, calcium, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A physical exam focused on your symptoms • Answers to your questions/concerns • Education about celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity. • A review of your blood tests and imaging test results • New blood tests or imaging tests • A medical order to schedule an upper endoscopy (and/or colonoscopy, if required.) • Follow-up visits • A referral to visit a registered dietitian for gluten-free diet counseling

3. Visit Timeline with your Gastroenterologist



4. Common Questions You May Discuss with your Gastroenterologist:

- a. What is celiac disease?
- b. What is non celiac gluten sensitivity?
- c. What is gluten?
- d. How do I get celiac disease?
- e. If I have celiac disease, do my children need to be tested?
- f. What blood tests should I have checked and how often?

- g. How often should I have an upper endoscopy?
- h. Besides a gluten-free diet, is there any other treatment?

5. Recommendations for Patients with Celiac Disease or Non Celiac Gluten Sensitivity:

- Schedule your follow-up visits with your doctor in advance.
- Make sure to check with your primary care doctor and/or your insurance company if a referral is needed.
- If symptoms do not improve on the gluten-free diet, contact your gastroenterologist.
- It is highly recommended to visit a registered dietitian skilled in the gluten-free diet.
- Keeping a food diary can help you notice any foods which might trigger symptoms.

6. Keywords:

- **Gastroenterologist:** Doctor specializing in stomach and intestinal diseases
- **Upper endoscopy:** An outpatient procedure (performed under sedation) in which a tube with a camera is inserted down the throat into the esophagus, stomach and small intestine
- **Colonoscopy:** An outpatient procedure in which a tube with a camera is introduced into the anus to look at the large intestine.
- **Food diary:** A notebook where you track what you eat and drink daily; this allows you, your dietitian, and doctor to identify possible food triggers

7. References for you:

- a. [Patient education: Celiac disease \(The Basics\).](#)
- b. [Patient education: Celiac disease in adults \(Beyond the Basics\).](#)

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