



## May: Celiac Awareness Month



**Celiac disease** is a medical condition in which the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten. This results in an inability of the body to absorb nutrients: protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, which are necessary for good health. Although statistics are not readily available, it is estimated that 1 in 133 individuals in Canada are affected by celiac disease.

**Gluten** is a protein found in wheat, rye, triticale, barley. It is the gluten in the flour that helps bread and other baked goods bind and prevent crumbling. This feature has made gluten widely used in the production of many processed and packaged foods. At the present time there is no cure, but celiac disease is readily treated by following a gluten-free diet. This requires knowledgeable dietetic counseling.

Common **symptoms** are anemia, weight loss, fatigue, cramps and bloating, irritability. In other cases, sufferers from gluten-intolerance develop an intense burning and itching rash called dermatitis herpetiformis.

Until recently physicians had to rely on clinical signs to suggest the **diagnosis** and to select which patients should have further testing done to prove the diagnosis. This may be difficult since these symptoms may be vague or of varying degree of severity. Now simple blood screening tests are becoming available to help this process. A definitive diagnosis can only be made through a small bowel biopsy.

### What not to eat

Barley  
Breading, bread stuffing  
Couscous  
Croutons

Wheat starch  
Wheat bran, wheat flour  
Modified wheat starch  
Oatmeal

Graham flour  
Pastas  
Rye bread and flour  
Semolina

Always read the **food label**. Here are some unexpected sources of gluten:

- Beer, ale, lager
- Broth, soups
- Candy, chocolate
- Flavored teas and coffees
- Bacon bits imitation and seafood imitation
- Drugs (ask your pharmacist)
- Sausages
- Soy sauce

For a list of **restaurants** that offer a gluten-free menu, go to the following websites:

- [www.theceliacscene.com](http://www.theceliacscene.com) (English only)
- [www.fqmc.org](http://www.fqmc.org) (You must become a member to have access to the restaurants list)
- [www.viesansgluten.ca](http://www.viesansgluten.ca)

Source : [www.celiac.ca](http://www.celiac.ca)

### June 14: World Blood Donor Day

Every year, on June 14, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The event serves to raise awareness for the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank voluntary blood donors for the life-saving gift of blood.

Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help patients suffering from life-threatening conditions live longer, provide them with a higher quality of life and supports complex medical and surgical procedures.

#### **Nothing is more positive than a negative donor!**

Wanted: Rh negative blood donors! They may be rare but they're in high demand!

Héma-Québec is constantly searching for Rh negative blood donors. Fact is, people with this type of blood represent 15% of the total Quebec population but the demand for Rh negative blood is strong given its high compatibility. If your blood group is A-, B-, O- or AB-, give the gift of life by visiting one of many Blood Donor Centres, they are open 7 days a week. For more information, please go to [www.hema-quebec.qc.ca](http://www.hema-quebec.qc.ca) or dial 1-888-666-4362.

