

# IBS Treatment Center Newsletter

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## IBS and Gluten Intolerance

**L**ike many people who have been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), you may have discovered that you are gluten intolerant. Or maybe you have IBS symptoms and are wondering if you are gluten intolerant.

The diagnosis of IBS of course is (or was) of no real help to you, and it really is of no help to anyone, except when it is definitively used to rule out potentially deadly conditions. IBS is a diagnosis often given to people with chronic diarrhea, constipation, gas, bloating, abdominal pain, or a combination of any of those symptoms. But being diagnosed with IBS only means that your bowel irritates you, which you already know.

The symptoms called IBS are something we deal with every day at the IBS Treatment Center. Regardless of whether a patient has been formally diagnosed with IBS, or just has the symptoms, we try to identify the cause or causes.

Some people have these symptoms, at least in part, because their bodies are intolerant of gluten. At least 35-50 million people in the U.S. suffer from 'diagnosable' IBS. As studies have clearly shown, approximately 3 million people have celiac disease. While people with IBS symptoms obviously can't all have celiac disease, the situation is more complicated than you might think.

Far more than 3 million people are gluten intolerant and exhibit symptoms such as

IBS when they include gluten in their diet.

In fact, many people who do not have celiac disease turn out to have symptoms caused by the consumption of gluten.

We frequently see this situation at our clinic.

How can this be? The confusion comes because not everyone who suffers from gluten intolerance has celiac disease. Celiac is a very specific condition related to a specific type of damage in the body. It is only one type of gluten intolerance. I've seen far too many patients who've tested negative for celiac disease, either at my clinic or elsewhere, yet have a dramatic improvement in their health on a gluten free diet, to write them off as a false negative celiac diagnosis.

These patients test positive for reactions to gliadin and the gluten containing grains. But they do not have a positive biopsy or positive blood tests for celiac disease. Once they remove gluten from their diet they invariably feel much better. This happens too often to be coincidence or placebo. And the testing supports their diagnosis.

Unfortunately these kinds of test results are often ignored, and it can be difficult to find a doctor who will work with you. But eventually I am confident that the medical community will finally come together on this topic.

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Of course, not all IBS patients are gluten intolerant. It is only one of many causes. Fortunately there are other tests than can illuminate exactly what is causing these symptoms. So if you still suffer from digestive problems, whether or not you are gluten intolerant, don't give up. There is an answer for you.

## Dr. Stephen Wangen

Dr. Wangen is himself gluten intolerant and formerly suffered from IBS. He is the founder of the IBS Treatment Center ([www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com](http://www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com)) and the author of The Irritable Bowel Syndrome Solution. His new book, Healthier Without Wheat: A New Understanding Of Wheat Allergies, Celiac Disease, and Non-Celiac Gluten Intolerance, is due out this summer.

## Research Study for Celiacs

What Is the Relationship Between Quality of Life and Coping Strategies in Adults with Celiac Disease Adhering to a Gluten Free Diet? That is what researcher Melissa M. Smith, PhD(c), APRN, BC, CNS of Duquesne University School of Nursing is aiming to find out.

If you are an adult with celiac disease and are living gluten-free here is a great opportunity for you to help improve the body of information about people with celiac disease. The IBS Treatment Center supports this study and invites all qualified celiacs to participate.

Please read the information and instructions for how to participate by visiting this PDF file on our website. Click on this link to see it: <http://www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com/CeliacStud.pdf> Thanks for your help!

Special note to residents of Washington State: The demographics survey doesn't have an option for Washington so please choose Oregon and put a note in the comments box "WA" to indicate that you live in Washington State.

Opening the file requires that you have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is free and very useful. Download and install by going to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

### March 2008 Events Calendar

-GIG Annual Education Conference:

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

June 6 and 7, 2008

**Register Now On-Line at:**

<http://www.gluten.net/events.htm>



### IBS & Gluten Intolerance Support Group Meetings

-This month's support meeting was held on **Tuesday March 4th**. The meetings land on the **first Tuesday** of every month therefore, the next meeting will be on **Tuesday April 1, 2008** from 6:30-7:45 pm. No foolin'! Come join us!

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