



Australian Prescriber



AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

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COELIAC DISEASE DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE

One in 2,000 Australians may have coeliac disease. Even more people may be affected by sub-clinical or 'silent' coeliac disease. According to an article in the latest issue of *Australian Prescriber*, coeliac disease is more common than previously thought.

Coeliac disease results from abnormal immune reactions to dietary gluten - found in wheat, barley, rye and possibly oats.

The disease causes diarrhoea, flatulence, bloating and fatigue. In women it can cause infertility, or repeated miscarriage. Children with coeliac disease can become irritable and do poorly at school.

Diagnosis requires small bowel biopsy. Blood tests can be unreliable. If the diagnosis is confirmed, the patient needs to follow a gluten-free diet.

For further information people with coeliac disease can contact the Coeliac Society in their state. The Coeliac Society promotes the clear labelling of food.

For a copy of the complete article or information about Australian Prescriber, visit the homepage http://www.australianprescriber.com/public_html/default.htm or phone 02 6289 7038.

Contact: Sue Shepherd, specialist coeliac dietitian associated with the Coeliac Society of Australia, phone 0413 649 537.

Australian Prescriber is a national independent review of therapeutic topics designed to assist health professionals in their duties. The journal provides independent comment - no advertising is accepted.

Among other articles, the current issue of *Australian Prescriber* also looks at Cognitive behaviour therapy in medical practice.