

# Detroit Medical Center Gastroenterology Information



Many digestive disorders require clinical care by a physician/specialist. The DMC is home to many of the state's leading experts in Gastroenterology.

## Celiac disease

Celiac disease is a digestive disease that damages the small intestine because of a sensitivity to gluten, which is found in wheat, rye, barley, and oats. This hereditary disorder interferes with the absorption of nutrients from food. When persons with celiac disease eat foods containing gluten, their immune system responds by damaging the small intestine, resulting in malnutrition. Celiac disease is the most common genetic disease in Europe. An estimated 2 million Americans have been diagnosed with celiac disease.

## Crohn's disease

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease that is a chronic condition that may recur at various times over a lifetime. It usually involves the small intestine, most often the lower part called the ileum. However, in some cases, both the small and large intestine are affected. Sometimes, inflammation may also affect the entire digestive tract, including the mouth, esophagus, stomach, duodenum, appendix, or anus.

## Diverticular disease

In the colon, some people have small pouches that bulge outward through weak spots. Diverticular disease is an inflammation or infection in the pouches, known as diverticula. Having infected or inflamed diverticula is a condition called diverticulitis. The disease is common in developed or industrialized countries - particularly the United States- where low-fiber diets are common.

## Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a digestive disorder that is caused by gastric acid flowing from the stomach into the esophagus. Heartburn, also called acid indigestion, is the most common symptom of GERD. Heartburn is described as a burning chest pain that begins behind the breastbone and moves upward to the neck and throat. It can last as long as two hours and is often worse after eating. Lying down or bending over can also result in heartburn.

## Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is malignant cells found in the colon or rectum. The colon and the rectum are part of the large intestine, which is part of the digestive system. Cancerous tumors found in the colon or rectum also may spread to other parts of the body. Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women.

The following are the most common symptoms of colorectal cancer. However, each individual may experience symptoms differently. People who have any of the following symptoms should check with their physicians, especially if they are over 50 years old or have a personal or family history of the disease:

- A change in bowel habits such as diarrhea, constipation, or narrowing of the stool that lasts for more than a few days
- Rectal bleeding or blood in the stool
- Cramping or gnawing stomach pain
- Decreased appetite
- Vomiting
- Weakness and fatigue
- Jaundice - yellowing of the skin and eyes

The symptoms of colorectal cancer may resemble other conditions, such as infections, hemorrhoids, and inflammatory bowel disease. It is also possible to have colon cancer and not have any symptoms. Always consult your physician for a diagnosis.

**If you are concerned about any of these conditions, discuss them with your doctor. If you do not have a doctor, the DMC can find one for you. Call 888-DMC-2500 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.**