COELIAC DISEASE **MEDICAL APPENDIX**

DEFINITION

1. **Coeliac Disease** is an abnormality of the mucosa of the small intestine brought on by contact with dietary gluten.

2. **Gluten** is a protein which occurs in various forms of grain, namely wheat, barley, rye and probably oats.

3. Alternative names for the condition are:-

    3.1. **gluten-sensitive enteropathy**.
    3.2. **non-tropical sprue**.
    3.3. **idiopathic steatorrhoea**.
    3.4. **coeliac sprue**.

CLINICAL FEATURES

4. The condition commonly presents in the infant after weaning but it may present at any time of life.

5. The classical features are pale, bulky, loose offensive stools associated with abdominal distension and discomfort, loss of weight and the development of nutritional complications.

AETIOLOGY

6. The disease is of unknown aetiology.

7. There is a clear-cut familial susceptibility, the evidence suggesting that this has a genetic basis. The disease shows a high association with the histocompatibility antigens B8 DR3, DR7 and DQ2.

8. The morphological abnormality of the intestinal mucosa is reversible by withdrawal of gluten from the diet. Sensitivity to gluten is permanent.

CONCLUSION

9. **Coeliac disease** is a condition resulting from damage to the intestinal mucosa brought about by contact with gluten. The cause is unknown but is believed to be a genetically determined immunological reaction.

REFERENCE

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