

Pill could put bread back on the plates of people with celiac disease

Celiac disease is caused by the body's reactions to proteins found in [wheat, barley and rye](#). Nearly 30 different drug companies are now working intensively to develop a pill or vaccine against the disease.

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"With so much activity and so many serious players out there, I think something will emerge that will help people with celiac disease," [researcher Knut] Lundin says.

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If these efforts are successful, a person with celiac disease could take a pill with enzymes that break down gluten before they eat foods that would ordinarily give them problems, such as pizza.

Another option might be that celiac sufferers would get injections of gluten, with the idea that the immune system will eventually learn to understand that gluten is not a dangerous invader.

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A large vaccine study that showed promising results in the first clinical phase has recently been discontinued following a mid-term review. The results showed no difference in reduction of symptoms or immune activation in those vaccinated with the active substance and those receiving a placebo.

But [researcher Ludvig] Sollid and Lundin's optimism is primarily due to the basic research that has been undertaken during the last decade. Celiac disease is the autoimmune disease that researchers understand best of all autoimmune diseases today.

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