The cause of celiac disease, also called celiac sprue, or gluten sensitive enteropathy (GSE), is unknown. However, the University of Maryland's Center for Celiac Research indicates that the genes HLA DQ2 and/or DQ8 are absolutely necessary to develop the disease. But just because people have this gene does not guarantee celiac disease. “The disease is often inherited,” says MayoClinic.com. “Many times, for reasons that aren't clear, the disease emerges after some form of trauma: an infection, a physical injury, the stress of pregnancy, severe stress or surgery.”