

Understanding Celiac Disease

(NAPSA)—There may be comforting news for people who don't understand their digestive distress.

A leading medical professional organization and its foundation, representing pediatric gastroenterologists, are educating the public about celiac disease, a common genetic disease, and launching a new Web site, www.celiachealth.org.

Celiac Disease GI symptoms may include:

- Abdominal cramping
- Bloating and gas
- Diarrhea
- Constipation

Celiac Disease Non GI symptoms may include:

- Anemia
- Stunted growth
- Poor weight gain
- Chronic itchy rash



Individuals with the disease are affected by gluten—a protein in wheat, barley and rye—which inflames and damages the intestine. Early diagnosis and treatment may decrease the frequency of associated disorders including intestinal malignancies, osteoporosis and infertility. A major problem is under-recognition of the disease.

To address this, the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition and the Children's Digestive Health and Nutrition Foundation developed new scientific guidelines about celiac disease in children for physicians and launched a public awareness campaign. A new patient brochure and soon-to-be available gluten free diet guide along with other materials may be found on their Web site at www.celiachealth.org.

The campaign is made possible by grants from the University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research and Prometheus Laboratories, Inc.