



Health Awareness

More Gluten-Free Mainstream Options

(NAPSA)—Here's news you may find easy to swallow: If eating wheat, barley or rye causes havoc in your tummy, you don't have to feel frustrated by the lack of affordable gluten-free options any more. Change is coming sooner than you may think.

More and more people are following a gluten-free lifestyle for a variety of reasons—especially the increasing number of Americans diagnosed with celiac disease. Removing gluten from your diet means eliminating wheat, barley and rye, which are found in many foods and ingredients.

An estimated one out of 133 Americans have celiac disease, which is a chronic inherited digestive disorder that can cause damage to the small intestine. When people with celiac disease eat gluten, it triggers their immune system to attack the small intestine. This results in damage to the villi, which make up the lining of the small intestine and are necessary in helping the body to absorb nutrients. Over time, this damage can lead to malnutrition. While celiac disease has no cure, it can be managed by following a gluten-free diet.

“Living with celiac disease presents daily challenges for millions of Americans who carefully screen the foods they eat by reading food labels, asking questions and deciphering ingredient information,” explained Elaine Monarch, Celiac Disease Foundation executive director.

If you have chosen to avoid gluten in your diet, be sure to consult a doctor or nutritionist. To start, there are a few simple steps to take to ensure your diet remains gluten-free.

Read ingredient listings. Along with avoiding wheat, grain and barley, those following a



gluten-free diet should also look out for other common food ingredients that contain gluten. These include bulgur, graham flour, semolina flour and brewer's yeast. Speak to a doctor or registered dietitian to learn more about how to read product labels to determine whether gluten is present.

Use caution when dining out. Many restaurants will gladly modify their menu to include suitable dishes for customers following a gluten-free lifestyle. Ask to speak with the chef or manager prior to ordering to ensure your meal is gluten-free.

Look for “gluten-free” packaging. Some mainstream food manufacturers are now reformulating their products to be made free of gluten. One such is Chex® cereals. In addition to Rice Chex, General Mills recently announced that five additional Chex cereals are now gluten-free (labeled on the front of the box information panel, which includes nutrition and ingredient information), including Chocolate Chex and Honey Nut Chex. Chex also features gluten-free recipes at www.Chex.com/glutenfree.

For more about gluten-free products and celiac disease, contact the Celiac Disease Foundation (www.celiac.org) and Celiac Sprue Association (www.csaceliacs.org).

About Gluten-Free Chex

General Mills led the way in 2008 with the introduction of Rice Chex as the first mainstream, gluten-free cereal. Recently, Corn Chex, Honey Nut Chex, Chocolate Chex, Cinnamon Chex and Strawberry Chex were reformulated to be gluten-free and are now widely available across the country. To verify that the cereal is the gluten-free formula, consumers should look for “Gluten Free” on Chex cereal packaging.