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Today's date: April 11, 2007
Event date: Saturday, May 19, 8:30 a.m. to noon
Pre-registration due: April 30

Gluten Intolerance Group offers blood testing to detect celiac disease
Celiac awareness event and testing to be held May 19 at Wheeler Farm
Pre-registration for awareness event and testing due April 30—testing is free with registration

Salt Lake City, April 11, 2007—The Utah Gluten Intolerance Group branches are offering a blood test for celiac disease as part of its annual awareness event and walk. The blood test is free at the event for all who register up to 500 registrants. This year's celiac awareness event will be held Saturday, May 19 at Wheeler Farm, 6351 South 900 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121. The event will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Blood testing will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude when the 500 test kits are depleted.

“This is an affordable opportunity for people who suspect they have celiac disease to be tested,” says Marcie Coda, Salt Lake City Gluten Intolerance Group branch manager and event coordinator. “If you have any relatives with celiac disease, we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to find out if you also might have the disease.” Coda added that among people who have a first-degree relative diagnosed with celiac disease, as many as 1 in 22 people may have the disease. “By participating in a celiac disease blood test, seeking a physician's diagnosis as warranted, and living gluten free, many children and adults will be spared unnecessary and untold damage and complications to their health.”

Five hundred Tissue Transglutaminase IgA blood tests have been donated for the event by Prometheus Laboratories, Inc., a specialty pharmaceutical company that focuses on the detection and treatment of autoimmune, gastrointestinal, and inflammatory diseases, and the Binding Site, a manufacturer specializing in the research, development and production of immunodiagnostic kits. The blood tests are valued at \$76.50 each and must be used at the May 19 event.

The Wheeler Farm blood draw on May 19 will be conducted by licensed health care workers from local hospitals. The testing is under the guidance of the Gluten Intolerance Group's medical advisor, Dr. P.J. Pedersen, a gastroenterologist who practices at St. Mark's Hospital. The blood draw is in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and all participants are required to fill out a three-page medical release form prior to the event. The medical release and event pre-registration forms are due by April 30. Participants will be notified of test results by supporting physicians. Participants receiving a positive blood test result, are urged to contact their physician for consultation and follow-up testing.

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GIG offers blood testing to detect celiac disease at May 19 event, page 2

Pre-registration is \$18 or \$16 for those who also sign-up to volunteer at the event. Registration and blood draw medical release forms are available at www.gfutah.org or at Wild Oats Markets. Registration the morning of the walk is \$20. Pre-registration and medical release forms and event fees are due April 30. Registrants may give their blood draw test to a friend or family member, but a blood draw medical release form in that individual's name must be signed and submitted by April 30. The blood draw kit is valid only at the event on May 19.

The third annual awareness event, "Walking Feet Without Wheat," includes a gluten-free breakfast of waffles, breads, and pancakes made from gluten-free grains, yogurt, fruit, juices and meat. Major sponsors are Wild Oats Marketplace, Against the Grain, Blue Chip Group, Celiac Specialties, Pamela's Products and St. Mark's Hospital.

In addition to participating in the blood draw screening test, registrants are invited to walk a one kilometer trail and visit gluten-free food booths. A drawing for prizes begins at 11:30 a.m.

Celiac disease, also known as gluten intolerance and celiac sprue, is an inherited autoimmune disease of malnutrition induced by gluten in the diet. The prevalence of celiac disease in the U.S. is 1 in 133 people, but fewer than 20 percent have been diagnosed. There is no cure for the disease and no medication. Lifelong abstinence from gluten in the diet is the only treatment. Celiac disease is often misdiagnosed because symptoms are diverse. In some cases, there are no symptoms. Undiagnosed and untreated celiac disease can lead to serious complications. To learn more visit the National Institutes of Health awareness campaign at <http://www.celiac.nih.gov/> or www.gfutah.org.

May has been declared National Celiac Awareness Month by the Celiac Disease Foundation. Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey, New York, this year submitted a resolution to the House of Representatives endorsing May as Celiac Awareness Month and calling for increased federal funding for celiac research.

About Gluten Intolerance Group in Utah

Utah County Gluten Intolerance Group, the Salt Lake City Gluten Intolerance Group, and the Northern Utah Gluten Intolerance Group are branches of The Gluten Intolerance Group, also known as GIG, and are 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. The Gluten Intolerance Group's mission is to increase awareness of and knowledge about this common, but highly under-diagnosed illness. To learn more, go to www.gfutah.org

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