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Today's date: June 1, 2006
Event dates: June 9-11, Sheraton City Centre Hotel 150 West 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84101

**“97 percent of Americans with celiac disease are still not diagnosed”
National celiac disease experts to gather in Salt Lake City,
discuss new research, share coping tips, raise awareness for the undiagnosed
June 9-11**

Salt Lake City, June 1, 2006— The National Institutes of Health reports that 1 of every 133 Americans have a serious illness called celiac disease, also known as gluten intolerance, but, only a small fraction of people living with celiac disease in the U.S. have been diagnosed. National celiac disease experts will gather in Salt Lake City June 9-11 to present research, health and coping tips for the diagnosed and raise awareness of this insidious disease for the undiagnosed.

The experts will be in Salt Lake City as part of the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America's national education conference to be held at the Salt Lake City Sheraton City Centre hotel, 150 West 500 South.

Key presenters at the conference include: Dr. Alessio Fasano, University of Maryland Center for Celiac Research, who will present advances in celiac research; Dr. John Zone, University of Utah School of Medicine, who will discuss the latest developments related to skin health as it pertains to celiac disease; Dr. Janet Harnsberger, private practice pediatrician associated with Primary Children's Medical Center, who will present issues related to raising children with celiac disease; Carol Fenster, Ph.D. and consultant, who will demonstrate how to cook baked delicacies without wheat; and Shelley Case, registered dietician, who will detail the basics of the gluten free diet.

Once thought rare, celiac disease is associated with and can lead to as many as 200 other diseases and conditions including osteoporosis, lymphoma, stomach cancer, anemia, lactose intolerance, dermatitis herpetiformis (a burning, itching and blistering rash), Type 1 diabetes, thyroid disease, down syndrome, unexplained infertility, miscarriage, neurological conditions, rheumatoid arthritis and many others.

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“Many people have no symptoms and are not aware of the potential, devastating affects of the disease,” said Cynthia Kupper, executive director of the national GIG and a registered dietician. “Others suffer painful and often baffling symptoms and spend an average of 11 years seeking a diagnosis. They often endure uncomfortable procedures to rule out other illnesses before their celiac disease is diagnosed. Because we know that celiac disease runs in families, and with better awareness and education such as that provided at our annual conference, Americans will be able to ask their doctors for a new, fairly simple blood test.”

Celiac disease is a chronic, inherited disease which is the result of an immune-mediated response to eating gluten (a protein found in wheat, rye and barley) that damages the small intestine. The propensity for celiac disease can trigger at anytime in a person’s life. Typical triggers can include stress, surgery, pregnancy, giving birth, viral infections, or any life altering or traumatic event.

There is no pill for celiac disease at this time. The only treatment is following a life-long gluten-free diet. Foods, beverages, and medications that contain wheat, barley, rye, and cross contaminated oats must be eliminated completely. Based on current research, the National Institutes of Health predicts that 2 million Americans have celiac disease and estimates that only 60,000 have been diagnosed. Many more people suffer varying degrees of gluten intolerance. To learn more, go to www.nih.gov.

About the Gluten Intolerance Group

A not-for-profit organization, the Gluten Intolerance Group’s mission is to increase awareness of and knowledge about celiac disease, a common, but highly under-diagnosed illness. To learn more, go to www.gluten.net.

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