



Southern Arizona Celiac Support

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Dear Sir or Madam:

Celiac Disease is by far the most frequently occurring genetically based disease ever to be experienced by mankind. According to Dr. Alessio Fasano, world-renowned medical researcher and director for the University of Maryland's Center for Celiac Disease Research, Celiac Disease affects at least 1 out of every 130 Americans. This autoimmune disease, which is caused by an inability to digest gluten, can cause serious health risks if left untreated. Celiac Disease is a sensitivity to wheat, rye, oats, and barley. Celiacs, therefore, cannot enjoy a slice of pizza, a corned beef on rye, a Subway sandwich, or a Big Mac. They must be discriminating when buying ice cream and other foods that others take for granted for fear of hidden ingredients that may contain these grains.

Unfortunately, there is still a common misconception that Celiac Disease is a rare disease. Therefore, many patients still go undiagnosed. In addition, symptoms of Celiac Disease can vary from vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, depression, irritability, fatigue, anemia, sinusitis, and others; further adding to the number of undiagnosed patients. Even when diagnosed, there is not a pill or serum to cure it. Celiac Disease is treated by a lifelong restriction from gluten in the diet.

Researchers are seeking ways to better diagnose the disease, inform doctors of how to diagnose it, and to inform patients with Celiac Disease how to live with it. The Southern Arizona Celiac Support group, which is working its way up to nearly 200 members, is working together to inform the medical community about the disease and the food industry on ways to better serve their prospective customers. We are working hard on raising money so that we can continue our mission. This year we are proud to be holding the 4th Annual International Walk for Celiac Disease on April 23, 2005 at the University of Arizona. We would be extremely grateful for any donations that you would be willing to provide us with. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Georgina Rubal
So. AZ Celiac Support President