

CRAVING INFORMATION ON CELIAC DISEASE? UNFI CAN HELP!

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OCTOBER IS CELIAC AWARENESS MONTH!

October is generally recognized as Celiac Awareness Month, so we thought it might be appropriate to provide you with plenty of information which will allow you to better serve your customers in addressing their gluten-free needs.

Celiac disease (CD), often referred to as gluten intolerance, is a genetic disorder which results in damage to the small intestine. When people with CD eat certain types of protein called gluten, an autoimmune response is set off which damages the small intestine and causes it to lose its ability to absorb the nutrients found in food. This, in turn, can lead to malnutrition and a variety of other complications. Gluten is found in wheat, barley, rye and, to a lesser extent, oats. Related proteins are also found in triticale, spelt and kamut.

To develop celiac disease, three elements must be present: 1) the gene must be inherited, 2) gluten must be consumed and 3) the gene must be triggered. Common triggers may include stress, trauma (surgeries, pregnancies, etc) and viral infections.

Because an increasing number of physicians are now diagnosing celiac disease, those having CD represent a fast growing segment within our population. In fact, it is estimated that approximately 1 in 133 people have CD, with only about 3% of those having been diagnosed. For this reason, CD is considered the most under-diagnosed common disease in our country.

HOW CAN YOU SATISFY THE GLUTEN-FREE NEEDS OF YOUR SHOPPERS?

There are a number of steps you can take in order to increase your gluten-free emphasis and sales:

Register Your Store!

Some gluten-free manufacturers will register your store on their website in referring their consumers to the nearest retail location(s). For example, Kinnikinnick Foods, one of our largest gluten free manufacturers, offers this service to all retail stores carrying their items. Simply log on to their website, www.kinnikinnick.com, then click on corporate accounts and register your information. If you prefer not using e-mail, you can call Kinnikinnick at 1-877-503-4466 to register.

Use our UNFI Retailer Websites!

As a valued retail customer, you have free access to our retailer websites in your region. Our websites contain a tremendous amount of information intended to help supply your business needs, including gluten-free information. Please understand that in order to access our retailer website, you must first register to obtain your user name and password. To inquire about registering, please contact your customer service representative or territory manager.

The following gluten-free information is now available on our retailer website:

Gluten-free item list -

A complete list of hundreds of gluten-free items carried by UNFI.

Gluten-free best selling items:

In order to help you in planning your gluten free assortment, we provide you a ranking of our best selling gluten-free items.

Gluten free planograms:

UNFI has a variety of planograms specifically for your Gluten-free set, easily accessible on your regional website.

ONLINE RESOURCES WORTH LOOKING INTO

There is a real abundance of celiac disease information available, including information contained at the following web sites:

www.csaceliacs.org: This website of the Celiac Sprue Association (CSA) provides gluten-free recipes, identifies local CSA Support Chapters, and much more. Also, information is provided on the upcoming 29th CSA Conference to be held in Green Bay, Wisconsin on October 6th - 8th, 2006

www.gluten.net: Sponsored by the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG), this website has much detailed information about celiac disease and gluten-free diets, while also providing many related publication and food manufacturer links.

www.celiac.org: This Celiac Disease Foundation website offers celiac news updates, lifestyle suggestions, local celiac chapters and even a "Kids Korner" featuring a summer camp for celiac children.

www.celiacsociety.com: The Celiac Society is relatively new, having been founded in 2004, and its website is mostly food oriented. It claims to feature over 3000 gluten-free items and even has an online gluten-free superstore.

www.glutenfreerestaurants.org: This website of the Gluten-Free Restaurant Awareness Program allows you to locate gluten-free restaurants while also providing additional information on celiac disease.

www.celiacdiseasecenter.columbia.edu/symposium: Provides all the details for the Twelfth Annual International Celiac Disease Symposium in NYC from Nov 9-11, 2006.

ADDITIONAL UNITED NATURAL FOODS GLUTEN-FREE SERVICES

UNFI tri-annual catalog: Please note that we designate gluten-free items in our tri-annual catalog with a “g”, which is located between the item description and the unit cost for all gluten-free items. In the West region publications, you’ll see a special gluten-free symbol (a star with a white circle in the middle, below). The Western publications also dedicate an entire section in the beginning of the tri-annual catalog to Gluten-Free items.

☆ = Gluten Free

Beginning with the September tri-annual edition, the Eastern Region will also include a separate index for gluten-free vendors in the front section of that catalog.

INTRODUCING OUR GLUTEN-FREE SHELF TALKERS

In order to help your customers identify gluten-free items in your store, UNFI will make special shelf talkers available to you, our valued retailers, which clearly designate “gluten-free”, alongside an attractive gluten-free logo. These specially-designed shelf-talkers will be available for purchase through UNFI. For details on how to purchase these items, please contact your UNFI Territory Manager or inside sales rep.



This special symbol will be printed on UNFI’s new Gluten-Free shelf-talkers, aiding your customers in easily identifying gluten-free items throughout your store.

Most health experts agree that the only real way to treat celiac disease is to refrain from consuming foods containing gluten. This means that the popularity of gluten-free foods will continue to grow at a very fast pace. Please let us know how we can further help you in servicing your gluten-free shoppers!

- Your friends at United Natural Foods