

## **FREED FROM LIMITED CHOICES IN GLUTEN-FREE FOODS**

**Approximately two-million Americans suffer from celiac disease and can't eat anything containing gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Over the past four years, retail sales of gluten-free foods and beverages have risen 28 percent, according to a report last month from market-research publisher Packaged Facts. Nutritionist Emma Buckley visited The Early Show on Friday, May 15, 2009, and discussed various gluten-free options that many consumers may be unaware of. These options include snacks, meals, cakes, breads and others. The availability of all these foods offer choices and possibilities for many, who were once limited from choices. May is also Celiac Awareness month.**

**The bottom line? Gluten-free diets require shopping, creativity and vigilance, but can be maintained -- deliciously. Buckley says people can go gluten-free and still enjoy some of their favorite foods:**

### **WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT MEAN WHEN FOOD IS GLUTEN-FREE?**

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye so foods that don't contain wheat barley and rye are essentially gluten free. Gluten is responsible for the elasticity and chewy texture that foods made from these grains have.

### **WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE AND HOW DOES IT EFFECT PEOPLE? ALSO, WHAT DOES EATING FOODS THAT CONTAIN GLUTEN DO TO PEOPLE WITH THIS DISEASE?**

CD is an autoimmune disease that affects almost 1% of the population. 1 in every 133 Americans are thought to have Celiac Disease and a staggering 97% are thought to be undiagnosed. CD is triggered by gluten and what happens is the body literally attacks it's intestinal tract. Which leads to severe abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, damage of the intestine and how you absorb nutrients which leads to fatigue, malnourishment, fertility problems, miscarriage and sometimes can be fatal. Children with CD are often diagnosed with failure to thrive because the tell tale sign of a distended abdomen is often thought to be just 'toddler belly'. But if your child isn't growing within the normal range and displays other signs like pain and discomfort after meals, it's might be worth investigating CD and a GF diet.

The only treatment for CD is a GF diet. There are no medications/drugs...but that's good because you're treating the disease with nutrition.

### **ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO DON'T SUFFER FROM CELIAC DISEASE EATING GLUTEN-FREE? WHY?**

There are lots of other people eating GF that don't have CD, like those with a wheat allergy or intolerance, IBS, or other food sensitivities. And children with ADHD and those on the autism spectrum have been seen to benefit from a GF diet. Other's simply want to remove highly processed grains from their diet and it's been known to elevate mood. And switching to other grains that don't have gluten such as corn, rice, quinoa, millet etc. are actually just as nutritious, if not more in some cases than W,B&R.

### **THE MARKETPLACE FOR GLUTEN-FREE HAS BEEN EXPANIDING. LET'S FIRST TALK ABOUT THE TASTE OF MANY GLUTEN-FREE FOODS -- HAS THIS CHANGED OR IMPROVED?**

GF market is exploding! In 2004 it was worth about half a billion dollars, by next year it's expected to be worth \$1.7....almost \$2bn. GF foods have come a long way in recent years. AS I mentioned already, gluten is responsible for the elasticity and chewable quality that you associate with wheat flour products so when you're trying to replicate that quality with other grain flours it takes a bit of work. But now with food science and processes so advanced, food companies are really able to manipulate the alternative flours so well that they're almost the same...kinda!

## AS FOR FINDING GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS ARE THESE NOW MORE READILY AVAILABLE IN SUPERMARKETS?

What was once a niche food and could only be found in specialty health stores, can now be found in mainstream grocery stores where there are literally whole SECTIONS devoted to GF. And they're not the only part of the food industry that's embracing GF, there are bakeries, restaurants and GF Communion wafers available!

## NOW, HAVE THE OPTIONS IMPROVED IN TERMS OF VARIETY?

There are tons of options available...in fact we could go through a whole day's worth of food GF... let's discuss.....

Breakfast: Cereals, waffles, English muffin

Lunch: GF Pizza with salad (GF dressing)

Dinner: GF pasta, chicken and vegetables...all meat, chicken, fish, veggies, and fruits are GF. I tried the pasta on my picky toddler and it passed the toddler taste test!

Snacks: Muffins, choc chip cookies....taste test!

## PLEASE TELL US WHAT TIPS CONSUMERS CAN FOLLOW FOR SHOPPING GLUTEN FREE?

The best tips for shopping GF is to READ the label and to know what to look out for. If it clearly states GF then you're good. But if not, be aware of W, B & R hidden as other names such as: Durum, semolina, couscous, Farina, Orzo wheat grass, Germ, Bran, Malt, malt flavoring. Malt is a key ingredient of most beers and some distilled alcohols. Also, gluten is used in instant and flavored coffees, makeup, some shampoos and even postage stamp and envelope adhesive! See...we told you it was glue!

## GLUTEN-FREE BULLET POINTS:

\*Gluten free food market has grown on average 25% per year. In 2004 it was worth \$5.8m; in 2008, \$1.56bn, estimated to be \$1.7bn 2010.

\*Reason for this is a raised awareness of Celiac Disease and a perceived health benefit by removing wheat, rye and barley from diets.

\*Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disease. The body attacks it's own intestinal tract leading to chronic illnesses. The only treatment is a gluten free diet.

\*Approximately 1 in 133 Americans are thought to be Celiac and 97% of those are undiagnosed.

\*Other illnesses seem to benefit from a gluten free diet: IBS, ADHD and kids on the autism spectrum seem to benefit although there is little conclusive evidence.

\*Celebrities with CD are raising awareness such as Elizabeth Hasslebeck and CNN News anchor, Heidi Collins (whom I've interviewed)

\*GF foods are typically made with rice flour and other grains.

\*Gluten is responsible for the 'elasticity' of flour and gives wheat products its velvety 'mouth-feel'.

\*Replacing wheat flour for baking, pasta's, breads, etc. used to leave the products with a saw-dust feel but now really great alternatives and processes have been discovered leading to much similar tasting and feeling foods.

\*What was once a 'niche' market had now become quite mainstream with a lot of the larger chains of grocery stores containing a GF section.

\*Large Food companies are now creating gluten free products, King Arthur Flour has a gluten free range.

\*Wholefoods, Trader Joes, Safeways all carry a large gluten free range.

\*Websites such as glutenfree.com

\*Most popular brands of foods are: Glutino (whole range), Tinkyada pasta, Mi-dell cookies, Gluten free pantry, ( we can break down the foods into categories: breads, cakes/cookies, pastas, cereals, snacks etc)

\*I tried the Glutino brown rice pasta and my picky toddler didn't bat an eyelid! I also bought the Mi-del chocolate chip cookies and they were very acceptable!