

Media Alert Media Alert Media Alert

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**DALLAS / FT. WORTH WALK/RUN TO RAISE MONEY FOR
COMMON, YET UNHEARD OF DISEASE**

*Celiac disease: most common genetic disease of mankind,
Yet most are undiagnosed*

DALLAS, TX – Celiac disease is the most common genetic condition affecting humans, yet few people have heard of it, and most that have it go undiagnosed. Dozens of countries around the world will hold walk/run events to raise funds for research on this common and intriguing condition. The North Texas event will be a 1mile/2 mile walk/run at Bod Woodruff Park in Plano, and 500 participants are expected.

Celiac disease is an autoimmune condition that results in intolerance to gluten. Gluten is in wheat, rye, and barley; most celiacs avoid oats as well, because of contamination with gluten-containing grains. While foods like bread, pasta, cookies, and cake are obviously off-limits, so are many sauces and processed foods, since gluten can be hidden in additives and flavorings. The beauty of this condition is that when gluten is eliminated from the diet, health is fully restored.

New prevalence figures indicate that about 2.5 million Americans – one in 133 “healthy” people – have celiac disease (www.celiaccenter.org). Yet most people are not yet diagnosed, and often, in fact, are misdiagnosed with other conditions. For people with symptoms, one in 22 has celiac disease.

People with celiac disease who continue to eat gluten suffer malabsorption of nutrients. “Classic” symptoms of celiac disease are gastrointestinal in nature: gas, bloating, diarrhea or constipation. In children, there may be other symptoms such as short stature or failure to thrive.

But interestingly, the majority of people with celiac disease have “atypical” symptoms such as headaches (including migraines), infertility, joint or muscle pains, neurological disorders, mood disorders, and the presence of associated autoimmune conditions such as insulin-dependent diabetes, systemic lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and a myriad of other symptoms. Some people have no symptoms whatsoever, so it’s not surprising that they go undiagnosed.

Many people who have celiac disease are misdiagnosed as having irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or a number of other conditions. The danger of a

misdiagnosis is that people who have celiac disease must eat a strict gluten-free diet. If they don't know they have the condition, they're not likely to be eating gluten-free, and severe intestinal damage can occur.

"People often ask if celiac disease is so common, why more people don't have it?" said Danna Korn, bestselling author and expert on the wheat-free/gluten-free diet. "The answer is that they do. They just don't know it yet."

The Dallas "edition" of the Fourth Annual International Walk/Run for Celiac Disease is at Bob Woodruff Park, Plano on June 11th. A health fair will feature gluten-free products, and a number of educational booths and product vendors. Funds raised will be donated to the Center for Celiac Research at the University of Maryland.

The 2 mile starts at 9:00 a.m; the 1 mile starts at 9:30 a.m. All participants will receive a tee-shirt, while supplies last.

For more information:

On the event: www.celiacwalk.org

On celiac disease: www.celiaccenter.org (Center For Celiac Research)

On celiac disease: www.celiachealth.org (National Institute of Health)

On local support group information: www.dfwceliac.org (Adults),

and www.dallasrock.org (for families with celiac children)

On testing for celiac disease: www.prometheuslabs.com

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