



GLUTEN FREE WATCHDOG

For Immediate Release

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Allergen advisory statements for wheat on products not labeled gluten-free but appearing to be free of gluten-containing ingredients were NOT a useful predictor of gluten content.

Citation: Tricia Thompson, Trisha B. Lyons and Amy Jones. Allergen advisory statements for wheat: do they help US consumers with celiac disease make safe food choices? European Journal of Clinical Nutrition advance online publication, 14 September 2016 doi:10.1038/ejcn.2016.155 <http://www.nature.com/ejcn/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/ejcn2016155a.html>

In the US, allergen advisory statements are *voluntary* and are not currently defined by any federal regulation. The FDA continues to state in recently updated guidance that allergen advisory statements must be truthful and not misleading.

There is very little published data on whether precautionary statements for wheat or gluten ((for example, Made in a facility that also processes wheat) are helpful to consumers with celiac disease when deciding if a food is appropriate to eat.

In this analysis, labeling information compiled for 101 products tested for gluten content through Gluten Free Watchdog, LLC was retrospectively reviewed for an allergen advisory statement for wheat, gluten or both. Products reviewed for this analysis were not labeled gluten-free but appeared to be free of gluten containing ingredients based on a review of the ingredients list (that is, no wheat, barley, rye, malt, brewer's yeast).

- 87/101 products tested for gluten did NOT include an allergen advisory statement for wheat or gluten on product packaging.
- Fourteen products tested for gluten DID include an allergen advisory statement for wheat or gluten on product packaging.
- Of the 87 products that did NOT include an advisory statement, 13 contained quantifiable gluten at or above 5 ppm including 4 products that tested at or above 20 ppm of gluten.
- Of the 14 products that DID include an advisory statement, only 1 contained quantifiable gluten at or above 5 ppm.

In this database review, precautionary labeling for wheat or gluten on products not labeled gluten-free but appearing to be free of gluten-containing ingredients was NOT a useful predictor of gluten content. In some cases, consumer reliance on precautionary statements for wheat or gluten could have resulted in choosing a product contaminated with gluten.

Ideally, allergen advisory statements should be used by manufacturers to help consumers make choices about which foods they can eat given their particular health constraints. The FDA should strongly consider regulating allergen advisory statements, especially in light of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

For more information about this study please contact:

Tricia Thompson, MS, RD
Founder, Gluten Free Watchdog, LLC
tricia_s_thompson@hotmail.com