



# GLUTEN FREE WATCHDOG

Dear restaurant manager,

The Food and Drug Administration has defined the term gluten-free. The FDA definition was created because of celiac disease. Only those restaurants that are able to provide appropriate meals for folks with celiac disease should use the term “gluten-free”.

What the FDA says about gluten-free claims and restaurants: *“If restaurants or other retail food establishments wish to make “gluten-free” claims (or the synonymous claims “no gluten” “free of gluten” or “without gluten”) for any of their menu items, **these foods should meet all of the requirements FDA has established for a food labeled gluten-free, including not containing 20 parts per million or more gluten, whether or not the presence of gluten is due to accidental cross-contact occurring in the kitchen.** If restaurants cannot ensure that the foods they prepare fully comply with FDA’s definition of gluten-free, restaurants should not refer to their foods as being “gluten-free.”* (From <https://www.glutenfreedietitian.com/restaurants-and-gluten-free-labeling-claims/>).

Let’s remember why we have a gluten-free labeling rule: *“Need for the rule: ... Celiac disease has no cure, but individuals who have this disease are advised to avoid all sources of gluten in their diet to protect against adverse health effects associated with the disease...Establishing in this final rule a regulatory definition of the food labeling term “gluten-free” and uniform conditions for its use in the labeling of foods is necessary to ensure that individuals with celiac disease are not misled and are provided with truthful and accurate information with respect to foods so labeled.”* (From <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/08/05/2013-18813/food-labeling-gluten-free-labeling-of-foods>)

If you need help developing protocols to safely serve those with celiac disease please reach out to Gluten-Free Food Service <https://gffoodservice.org/>, Beyond Celiac <https://www.beyondceliac.org/gluten-free-diet/dining-tips/great-gluten-free-foodservice-training/meet-our-kitchens/>, or The Gluten-Free Food Program, Inc. <https://gf-finder.com/>

Thank you.

Tricia Thompson, MS, RD  
Founder, Gluten Free Watchdog, LLC