

Foreword

Until recently, celiac disease was considered a medical curiosity. Most physicians, registered dietitians, and other health care professionals knew little about the disease and spent little time explaining it to patients. Likewise, discussion of the gluten-free diet was limited. Only a few people required this diet, and health care providers usually told those who did to simply avoid wheat, rye, barley, and oats.

In the past decades, however, we have learned a phenomenal amount about celiac disease and other gluten-related disorders. Even in the eight years since the last edition of the *Celiac Disease Nutrition Guide* was published, our knowledge has expanded. We now recognize that celiac disease is one of the most common autoimmune diseases, affecting around 1% of most populations, and we know that there are large groups of people without celiac disease who also seem to benefit from a gluten-free or gluten-restricted diet. Well-designed studies in both the United States and Europe have shown that the true prevalence of celiac disease is much higher today than it was 50 years ago, and this trend does not show signs of slowing down. Notably, the rising rates of celiac disease coincide with increases in the incidence of other chronic inflammatory disorders, such as type 1 diabetes and inflammatory bowel disease.

Generations born today in North America may have upwards of a 2% to 3% lifetime risk of celiac disease. Furthermore, in the coming decades, an unknown number of people will follow a gluten-free or gluten-restricted diet for conditions other than celiac disease, such as autism, non-celiac gluten sensitivity, and irritable bowel syndrome. All told, an estimated 5 million to 10 million people in the United States may need to follow a gluten-free diet in the coming years. As a comparison, fewer than 1 million people in the United States have type 1 diabetes.

A number of novel nondietary therapies are currently being developed for celiac disease. However, it is highly unlikely that any of these treatments will replace the need for a strict, balanced gluten-free diet. With this in mind, I am very enthusiastic about the release of the Third Edition of the *Celiac Disease Nutrition Guide*. This booklet is an extremely valuable reference, which accurately explains celiac disease and other gluten-related disorders. It provides a solid foundation for the lifestyle changes that these diagnoses require. I congratulate the author, Tricia Thompson, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on this work and recommend it without reservation to individuals and families beginning a gluten-free diet.

To your health,

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