



Dear Educator,

Thank you for your wonderful service to the children in your school. In an effort to aid you in the education of the whole child, we would like to support you in your efforts to implement 504 Plans for students with Celiac Disease. In a nutshell, culture is shared values that shape behavior. The greatest expression of those from the Celiac Community is the gluten-free diet. They are just another cultural thread in the wonderful diversity of our schools and nation.

WHAT IS CELIAC DISEASE?

Celiac disease is a hereditary autoimmune disease that damages the villi of the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. What does this mean? Put simply, the body is attacking itself! Celiac disease is triggered by consumption of the protein called gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye. When people with celiac disease eat foods containing gluten, their immune system responds by damaging the fingerlike villi of the small intestine. When the villi become damaged, the body is unable to absorb nutrients into the bloodstream.

TREATMENT:

The only treatment for celiac disease is a 100%, life-long gluten-free diet, which means avoiding all forms of wheat, barley and rye and in some instances oats. Despite these restrictions, people with celiac disease can eat a well-balanced diet that consists of healthy and delicious foods. Even though it may seem impossible to maintain the diet at school, these simple guidelines will ensure that your child has the best possible experience throughout their school years. No less than 1/133 people in the US have Celiac Disease. 95% of those do not know it and are needlessly suffering. We hope that through your encounter with the NFCA you will find support and helpful information. Should your school care to be part of a campaign to help parents know more about celiac disease or to be part of a screening program, we would love to help you facilitate this.

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU:

1. **TRAINING:** GREAT is our online training program covering food handling in the school setting, for those on a gluten-free diet. We offer this program to schools accommodating students on a gluten-free diet.
2. **RESOURCES:** Online we have a variety of resources for schools including webinars, literature lists, accommodation recommendations, and lesson plan ideas.

Again, thank-you and we are at your service!

In Gratitude,
National Foundation for Celiac Awareness