



For immediate release

Gluten-free claim to be removed from General Mills Cheerios sold in Canada

October 20, 2017 (Mississauga, ON) The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has made an announcement that the words “gluten-free” will be removed from all Cheerios package sold in Canada by January 1, 2018.

The Canadian Celiac Association first objected to the claim in August 2016 and strongly recommended that people with celiac disease not consume the cereal, even though the box was labelled “gluten free”.

The announcement came in a letter addressed to a Canadian consumer who was one of many customer complaints to be filed against the products.

“We are delighted to hear that the regulators have determined that the claim must be removed from the packages”, said Melissa Secord, Executive Director of the Canadian Celiac Association. “Based on the advice of the members of our Professional Advisory Board, the experts of the Gluten-Free Certification Program, and other professionals working in the field, we believe that there is not adequate evidence to support the claim. When added to many reports from consumers with celiac disease reacting to eating the cereal, we believe this is the safe recommendation for Canadians.”

The CCA will follow up closely with the CFIA and Health Canada to continue to monitor this decision along with other products sold in Canada to ensure access to safe foods for people with celiac disease and gluten sensitivities.

The CCA is currently working on a grant from Agriculture and Agrifood Canada to examine the scope of gluten contamination in oats grown in Canada, and to determine where the contamination occurs as the oats are processed (field, harvest, transport, processing). The project is scheduled to be completed in March 2018.

Celiac disease is a medical condition in which the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten. This results in an inability of the body to absorb nutrients: protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, which are necessary for good health.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, triticale, barley. In the case of wheat, gliadin has been isolated as the toxic fraction. It is the gluten in the flour that helps bread and other baked goods bind and prevents crumbling. This feature has made gluten widely used in the production of many processed and packaged foods.

-30-

The Canadian Celiac Association, the national voice for people who are adversely affected by gluten, is dedicated to improving diagnosis and quality of life. For more information, please visit www.celiac.ca.

For more information:

Melissa Secord
Executive Director
1-800-363-7296 X 226
Melissa.secord@celiac.ca
www.celiac.ca

Sue Newell
Manager, Education and Special Projects
1-800-363-7296 X 224
sue.newell@celiac.ca