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FDA Announces New Gluten Free Products

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After six years of various definitions of “gluten free” the Food and Drug Administration is finally defining what the commonly used phrase means. Before last week, customers never actually knew what the term meant, since it did not have a secure meaning. Manufacturers were allowed to create their own “gluten free” products, so customers might have been receiving a large range of different products from different manufacturers that had different ingredients and different amounts of gluten.

The Food and Drug Administration finally announced on Friday that products labeled and sold as “gluten free” products do not exactly have to be gluten free at all. The products do not have to be free of wheat, barley, or rye, but they do have to be less than 20 parts per million of gluten. This has been considered as a low enough amount so that the health of citizens with celiac disease will not be effected or made sick by these products they consume.

Celiac disease is among around three million Americans and causes abdominal pain, diarrhea, and bloating. When a person with this disease eats gluten, they suffer from sudden weight loss, fatigue, long-term medical problems, and various rashes. This disease is linked straight to gluten, where a person’s body is not able to break it down properly, causing many problems throughout the body.

"Adherence to a gluten-free diet is the key to treating celiac disease, which can be very disruptive to everyday life," FDA Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg said. "The FDA’s new ‘gluten-free’ definition will help people with this condition make food choices with confidence and allow them to better manage their health."

The new rule also makes sure that the manufacturer labels their products correctly so there are no misinterpretations for the consumer. Products with labels such as gluten free, no gluten, or without gluten will have to meet the FDA standards under the new rule.

"Without clear ingredient information and a definitive labeling standard, celiac consumers are playing Russian roulette when it comes to making safe food choices," said Levario. "This will eliminate confusion for the consumer and will cut down on calls to companies to try and determine whether their products are safe and gluten free."

Even before the new rule was proposed, gluten free products have caused an uproar across the country. People have claimed that these products have created a healthier lifestyles for them and their families, even though they do not have celiac disease. The new rule has ensured healthier products and healthier Americans.

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